

Theorizing Encounters with Southern Disabled *Others*: The Reproduction of
Disablement in International Experiential Service Learning and Global
Citizenship Education and Invitations for Disruptions

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Abstract

In this study I seek to understand the way disability is employed to work towards the construction of normative subject-making in the field of International Experiential and Service Learning and Global Citizen Education (IESL and GCE). I theorize the way disability is constructed and responded to in IESL and GCE programs through interventions into the lives of disabled people. I explore how certain bodies are imagined as needing protection, care and interventions and other bodies are imagined as entitled to do that labour. I argue that these pedagogical processes reproduce certain subjectivities under Capital, and I query the ways in which the imagined Southern disabled body is integral in constituting Northerners able-bodied global citizenship identity.

I then turn to a case study analysis of a small Canadian IESL organization, Intercordia Canada, founded by Jean Vanier that operates a relational North/South model of ‘being with’ rooted in the experience and pedagogy of L’Arche. I analyze narratives from Intercordia student participants, centering their learning in a larger systemic analysis of neoliberalism and ways learning, relating, and care is structured. I use this case study as a way to get at the tensions and cracks in neoliberal education. I am not interested in countering the dangerous and damaging IESL and GCE narratives with ‘good’ ones. I am interested in exploring the complexity of working with young people in this space, and identifying moments of disruption to the reproduction of disabling narratives.

I draw from interdisciplinary fields, including critical pedagogy, critical IESL and GCE, critical disability, critical feminist and postcolonial theory to understand this complex and diverse space. I ask how we can envision this space in different ways, rejecting simplistic binaries and disabling discourses that marginalize and oppress certain subjectivities while celebrating others. This study extends the critical scholarship by employing critical disability theory to think through these encounters through in different ways, understanding how the disabled Southern *other* is essential in the forming of caring able-bodied Northern global citizens, imagined as desired subjects in the current phase of capitalism (Vrasti 2012). The critical literature in this field has thus far built a very rich and textured intersectional analysis using gender, race, class, but the attention to disability has yet to be taken up. Decolonization of this space cannot be realized without a deep consideration of disability and impairment.

This study takes up two broad fields of inquiry. Firstly, I ask how disability is utilized in the broad mainstream neoliberal field of IESL and GCE programs as a depoliticized and individualized fixed identity embodied in an imagined Southern *othered* body that can be cared for, intervened on, and helped, which works to constitute the imagined able-bodied, caring, benevolent, and helping global citizen from the North. I then work through alternative ways of imagining the Southern disabled *other*, through interviews with Northern student participants and mentors. I completed semi-structured qualitative interviews with former Intercordia Canada student participants and mentors who accompanied student participants in the program. All of the research participants were Northern student participant alumni of Intercordia, had completed the program between 2012 and 2014 and lived with host families and worked with small grass roots NGOs in various countries in the Global South for three months. They came from diverse identity positions and were geographically spread across the country.

Through the narratives of the Intercordia student participant alumni, I identified four areas of disruption to the disabling and uncomplicated IESL and GCE narratives of encounters with Southern *others*; vulnerability and mutuality as disruptions, disruptions to disability as individual and I explored their own responses to disruptions from the Southern *other*. I end by exploring the themes of uncertain subjectivities and future(s), speaking to the uncertainty that Intercordia student participants were left with after the program, which I contend signals to the unstableness of difficult learning.

My interviews with Intercordia student participants demonstrated that even programs with critical pedagogies are not attending to disability in a critical way. Student participants are not equipped with the analytical and theoretical tools to understand encounters with the disabled Southern *other* in ways that uncover complex disablement and the production of impairment. The narratives from Intercordia student participants demonstrated disruptions into normative learning that reproduces disablement; their narratives included attention to larger structures that disable and oppress Southern *others*, but their learning did not include the uncovering of the production of impairment. This uncovering needs analytical tools that the Intercordia model does not employ. There is fertile ground for deeper, more intersectional learning to be integrated into the Intercordia model. The lack of a focused Critical Disability lens means that those who enter into the space of being open to

unknowing, to receiving the Southern *other* as teacher and knowledge-holder do not have the skills to engage in a more complex critical disability analysis.

This study ends by taking up four ways that this uncovering can be facilitated: that international experiences need to be preceded and followed by academic courses that are housed in critical and intersectional programs of study like Critical Disability Studies; vulnerability and mutuality must be integrated into pedagogy; there is a need for deeper preparation with Southern hosts to allow them to challenge Northern students when they engage in hurtful or damaging ways, this preparation needs to be driven by their needs and desires, to deepened their participation; and pedagogy needs to be uncomfortable and destabilizing, with Intercordia's model of mentorship in placement is posited as a way to facilitate and support this. Opportunities to destabilize knowledge, ideas of and who can hold knowledge, and the creation of spaces to create new narratives for hope and a future resisting and decolonizing the project of dehumanizing neoliberalism is necessary work for educators to be actively engaging in. Educators in the field must remain unapologetically radical and work towards engaging *otherwise*.

Preface

This dissertation is an original work by Jessica Vorstermans. The research project, of which this dissertation is a part, received research ethics approval from York University Research Ethics Board, Project Name “The Absent Hosts and 'Caregivers': Narratives from those in the Global South who host university students from the Global North.”

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This was a labour of love, challenge, frustration, growth, birth, and an incredible intellectual space that I feel privileged to have given so much time and energy to. Of course this was, and is, a collaborative project. I don't think we can think and write about community in isolation, and this project is the result of years (!) of conversations, reading, experiences, encounters, more conversations and more reading with countless folks in the North and the South.

I am grateful for the space and time that Katie MacDonald so generously gives; her gift of affirming and remaining critical is unbelievable and so life-giving. This work is imbibed with ideas that I have talked about with you and there are countless parts where you inspired or pushed me. This work would not have been possible without your brilliant mind and the solidarity you give from your heart. As I write this I am thinking about what an understatement that is. You are a kindred spirit and time with you is full of huge ideas, commiseration, joy, rage, hopefulness, complexity and back again! Our world is lucky to have your heart and mind!

To Gillian Parekh, I would not have gotten through this doctorate without you! You are brilliant, compassionate and are so generous with your time, support and ideas - thank you! You gave me the hope and the actual plan for how to get this project done when I could not imagine a way it was possible. I called you one day as I pushed Saskia's stroller around the neighbourhood, and your words allowed me to envision the path and pushed me to get a plan in place and start regular writing times; without you this never would have happened!

To Isabel Killoran, supervisor extraordinaire! You are a perfect mix of no-nonsense and compassion, and go boldly and fiercely through the bureaucracy that is York. I am so grateful for your guidance, knowledge and support. Thank you for being my lifesaver when this project seemed too big, unmanageable and unfinishable. To my committee members Rachel Gorman and Roopa DesaiTrilokekar, who enthusiastically said yes to supervise this work, who asked questions that pushed me further and your own work pushed me to new questions. Rachel your critique of Intercordia as a facilitation of *Pax Americana* cracked open my work. Roopa your question as to whether I was reproducing the binary of the disembodied student pushed me to dig deeper into my data and work against this binary by being more clear in students' positionality and identities and ways that this shaped the research. To Nancy, who sat in my proposal defense and asked the question, 'will you critique Vanier's notion of what it means to be human?'; this question rattled around my brain as I worked through this project. To Gada Mahrouse and Barbara Heron who graciously accepted to sitting as the external and internal for this work. Your own work shaped this project in so many ways and I was grateful and anxious to have you examine my

work. Thank you to Hannah Deloughery, you jumped in and copy edited the final draft of this work. The final stretch was made more joyful for your presence and I am grateful for your questions and formatting wizardry!

I am grateful to the Southern host partners of Intercordia, especially to Esteban who has shifted my thinking in many ways. His praxis and life long commitment to *la lucha* (the struggle) is one that is so deeply rooted in mutuality and communion with those who live and struggle in the day to day in countless communities, on one small mountain, in one small province, on one small island, in one tiny part of the world. The mutual fidelity of Esteban to *el pueblo* and *el pueblo* to him will break and expand your heart in ways that call you to work at finding that fidelity in one's own life; how little it may feel in comparison.

I am grateful for the space this dissertation has given me to think so deeply in this area of international service learning. It has been a time of real discernment for me; where do I want to put my gifts and energy once I am finished? I thought a lot about the shrinking of spaces under neoliberalism that imagine different ways of being in the world. I want to work in this shrinking space, calling young people to something *otherwise*. I am not sure yet what that will look like yet or where it will be, but I am committed to working in just, thoughtful, compassionate and counter-cultural ways within this space. I feel alive when I am in this space; my ideas come in as clear and bright. Days when I can give time to this work I feel energized and the sky seems lighter and the people's faces I pass on the street seem clearer. I feel a relational pull towards being with others in this work.

I am grateful for all those who have worked with Intercordia over the years. To Mel, Clara, Lisa, Lauren, Michelle, Hannah, Katie... imagining and creating with you all has been one of my most life-giving experiences. The time shared at the Cedar's for retreats and re-integrations are some of the most beautiful experiences of engaging in labour I have had. Being immersed in counter-cultural work with you all kept me hopeful and moving forward through many difficult times.

To my partner, Juan for supporting me throughout this long journey. Our relationship is one across difference. We married at the L'Arche community in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic where we had met. My father gave a speech at the end of the ceremony. The room was filled with our families: mine, Juan's and L'Arche community members and my father explained that our commitment was one that Vanier invited us to; a relationship across differences. It has been joyful and challenging with so many times of frustration over the diverse ways we understand and act in the world, which are informed by our differences. Thank you for staying committed to this difficult project, even when we don't understand or can't understand each other. To my rambunctious and lovable Saskia, your presence in our lives is love, light, challenge, joy, and beauty.

To my parents who gifted me with the precious time to write each week while they took Saskia for a morning and an afternoon. I showed up at your kitchen table one day, 1 year old Saskia in tow, and tearfully asked for childcare time so I could write this dissertation. Your support and love has made this possible and also gave me much needed space on my own each week. Saskia has loved this time with Poppa and Meme and it has been beautiful to see your relationship with her. I was close to throwing in the towel and your support has made this project possible in a very material way. Thank you. Lastly, I want to thank all of the research participants. We all laughed together and some of us cried together. Thank you for opening your hearts and minds to this project. It was beautiful to listen to your responses and I was humbled by the importance you placed on this project. Many of you told me you read through your journal from your time in Intercordia to prepare for our interview. I hope I did your stories justice and I want to thank you for imagining difference in new ways, for embracing your vulnerability and for sharing your stories with me. Each interview gave me hope and I am so grateful for your openness and gifts.

I wrote this dissertation with my paternal grandfather coming in and out of my thoughts. He completed his PhD dissertation in the Netherlands as the Nazis moved closer to occupying the country. I grew up hearing stories of this time. He knew he had to finish before the impending occupation, as the Universities would most certainly be shut down and he would not be able to finish. He described his process of having a small piece of chocolate sitting up on the shelf over him. He would write and write, knowing that he could eat the piece of chocolate when he completed his writing goal for the day. He finished. Got his doctorate. And worked for the Dutch government as the Nazis took over. He described small acts of resistance during this time, such as purposefully completing orders in contrary ways. When he passed away at 95 years old, I inherited his PhD graduation cap. My motivation has been my desire to wear his hat when I receive my degree. Histories and resistance matters.

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Introduction

Where do you begin telling someone their world isn't the only one? (Walia, 2017)

“Capitalismo es el discapacidad mas grande” (capitalism is the biggest disability). This was the response from a community activist in the Dominican Republic when I asked about what they thought about disability in their community. He is the leader of one of the country's largest peasant organizations, which is located in the Western mountains of the island. The organization was born out of a struggle against transnational mining companies (most of which are Canadian) and large national resource extraction projects on their land. They struggle with issues of food security, environmental degradation, land seizure, and survival on every level. The positioning of disablement as tied to capitalism and transnational resource extraction was not the answer I was expecting. The politicization of disablement was so prominent; the critique was spot on.

Later that summer, I was barrelling up the mountain in the same community member's pickup truck. We had just picked up another community member from his home. He is a well-known activist and was engaged in supporting local labour activists in a struggle currently taking place, and had recently been receiving death threats. The night before he had seen men with machetes outside his home - a clear threat. So, we had traveled down the mountain to pick him up. He would sleep up the mountain at the community organization headquarters and travel back down in the morning to resume his position on the line being held across the only road traveling from the many rural communities to the main city center.

I was five months pregnant at the time and squished in the front seat between the two community leaders. We were racing up the mountain in the old pickup truck at midnight. The road was barely visible in the weak headlights. Darkness surrounded us. It is one of the most vivid memories I have of my time working with this community organization. Both men are well-known community activists and both have received death threats for their work. One has been jailed on fraudulent charges and had survived an assassination attempt; his truck had been firebombed as he drove up the mountain. Their love for the people - their complete physical, emotional, spiritual and bodily commitment to the people - was something that overwhelmed me. I spent hours that summer thinking about, and journaling

through, the conversations I had with both activists. The learning I engaged in through these conversations and experiences - so vivid, embodied and material - has shaped my thinking in deep and lasting ways. I am the academic I am today, this study is what it is, because of this learning from those on the ground; those experiencing oppression and violence and who remain called to *la lucha* (the struggle).

Research Question

I developed my research question through an anxiousness about the ways disability is taken up in the neoliberal educational field of normative International Experiential and Service Learning (IESL) and Global Citizen Education (GCE). Disability narratives and tropes are ever-so present in the field, but a Critical Disability lens is absent. This is troubling. I was interested in engaging in the work of analyzing the narratives and ways disability is constructed and employed in the larger helping and saving narratives that characterize this field, and spaces where resistance and interruptions are possible. To do this, I engage in a case study of a small IESL organization, Intercordia Canada that operates a relational North/South model of 'being with' rooted in the experience and pedagogy of L'Arche. I ask whether its Northern student participants engage in learning which disrupts the reproduction of disablement that characterizes the broad neoliberal field of IESL and GCE learning?

I begin by working through how disability is utilized in normative or mainstream IESL and GCE programs as a depoliticized and individualized fixed identity embodied in an imagined Southern *othered* body. A body that is to be cared for, intervened on and helped to constitute the imagined able-bodied, caring, benevolent, and helping global citizen from the North. This process of subject formation will be explored through analysis of the recruitment materials of two mainstream IESL programs, Cross Cultural Solutions and Projects Abroad, and published reflections from participants of these programs. I use the overarching term 'mainstream' to name the large diversity of IESL and GCE programs in this growing neoliberal field of education. I then analyze the narratives from Intercordia student participants, centering their learning in a larger systemic analysis of neoliberalism and ways learning, relating and care are structured.

This project builds on existing scholarship in the field of critical IESL and GCE, making known the ways that Northern subject-making is taking place in this space (Andreotti, 2015;

Chouliaraki, 2013; Jefferess, 2012; Heron, 2007; Mahrouse, 2014; Mostafanezhad, 2014; Vrasti, 2012). I look specifically at the reproduction of the able-bodied Northern global citizen through the binary reproduction of the disabled Southern *othered* body, which relies on a narrative of the able-bodied young Northerner as the helper who is justified in intervening in the lives of those in the South imagined as disabled. I work through the able/disabled binaries necessary for this subject-formation in neoliberal times. I theorize the encounter with the disabled *other* in mainstream IESL and GCE programming, drawing on analysis of two large organizations working in this space: Cross Cultural Solutions and Projects Abroad. I theorize how certain bodies are imagined as needing protection, care and interventions and the other bodies who are imagined as able to do that labour, and how this produces certain subjectivities. The imagined Southern disabled body is integral in constituting our able-bodied global citizenship identity.

I then work through alternative ways of imagining the Southern disabled *other*.¹ I take up the invitation to a different encounter with the Southern *other* through a case study of the relational model of Intercordia Canada (Springer, 2016), which operates with a model rooted in mutuality and vulnerability. Through this case study, I ask whether this model invites student participants into a space where they can begin to critically analyze and challenge the damaging and disabling narratives and pedagogical practices that are present in mainstream IESL and GCE. The relationality of the Intercordia model is rooted in its history of disability inclusion that is central to Jean Vanier's vision and founding of L'Arche, and this history and practice was inherited by Intercordia. I ask whether participants are engaging in more subversive or complicated narratives about their experiences with disability and global citizenship? Are the ways disability is engaged in the program - not as a medical understanding or an individualization of disability, but about the ways in which we are invested in ableism and disablement - creating a space for a more complex and critical understanding of disability? Does this programming call them to enter into a different learning space where these practices can be challenged or resisted? Coming from Vrasti (2010), influenced by Foucault, who calls this current phase of capitalism "a more tolerable, equitable, and pleasurable phase/face of capitalism" that "conceal[s] its tensions and postpone[s] its crises" (p. 2), I ask whether is Intercordia is creating a space

¹ I intentionally choose to use the term 'disabled people' to make known the disablement that people experience, this is in contrast to people-first language widely used in North America (Goodley 2011).

where participants can challenge the organizational forces that shape our consent to our current phase of capitalism and capitalist forms of community?

In this study I delve into accounts of encounters shared by student participants in the Intercordia program in order to understand whether the alternative framing of the program allows space for resisting neoliberal subject formation. I ask, do these encounters provide spaces for students to disrupt the dominant ways neoliberalism works at forming subjects? How do these encounters work to reproduce neoliberal power relations and inequity? Lastly, I ask how educators can work towards a more reciprocal and transformative practice of IESL and GCE by working to make known the able/disabled binaries and our role in the production of impairment and disablement. I highlight a number of pedagogical recommendations that invite student participants into encounters that can produce or create alternate readings of the world, alternative narratives, or value different ontologies. All of this is important work towards a diversity of an-*other* global citizenship education (Andreotti & DeSouza, 2012). A critical pedagogy only opens the possibility for disruption. Radical change requires “long haul work” and there can be no fantasy of “once and for all transformation into allies” of the transnational disability movement and all movements towards justice (Heron, 2007: p. 154). My work operates from this understanding; we need to be patient and faithful in our long haul labour of revolutionary love and systemic change that is relational and inclusive.

In this study, I explore encounters in the growing field of International Experiential Service Learning and Global Citizenship Education (IESL and GCE), embedded in the current Higher Education climate of internationalization. University and College students from the North are increasingly being pressed to internationalize their education (Larkin, 2012; Shubert, Jones & Desai Trilokekar 2009; Tiessen & Epprecht, 2012). Closely linked to the growth in international experiential education is the desire to build or foster an identity of global citizenship in young people from the North (Teissen & Huish, 2013). In the field of higher education in Canada, there has been an overwhelming interest for international experiential and service learning education across all disciplines yet there is no agreed upon structure for how this should be undertaken (Huish & Teissen, 2014). This renders the space diverse and fraught with ethical and moral entanglements, but there is also room for hope and alternatives. I understand the two fields of IESL and GCE as rooted in the colonial legacies, neocolonial and imperial relations of power, and as spaces where

young people from the North are formed as certain subjects under Capital. This process employs a specific, imagined, disabled, Southern *other* to shape and construct this able-bodied, helping, Northern subject.

As this study explores the learning journeys of students, I work hard at interrogating the larger neoliberal, structural, and pedagogical climate and not judging the students themselves, as they have been made into certain subjects under Capital. Many of the interviewed student participants expressed their struggle with the ways they have been formed as particular subjects, and how this has meant the oppression of other subjects. This is what makes this study so urgent; the dominant discourses in the field are teaching students from the North that it indeed is their role, their right, to travel overseas to cure, fix, help, rehabilitate, impart knowledge, and intervene in the lives of those in the South. The script is written. The roles are set. The affirmations from the dominant culture are there. When students are not being offered critical literature with the voices of those in the South resisting these interventions, literature from the North making known our intimate role in the creation of the very problems they seek to ‘fix,’ and when everyone else’s Facebook profile photo is of them holding a smiling racialized, and sometimes disabled, body, like a step in the rite of passage as a young Northerner, the dominant script is reproduced.

I imagine this study as sitting inside the overarching concern for the way capitalism is at work in our lives today. Slavoj Žižek (2011), celebrity cultural philosopher, explains;

Marx’s key insight remains valid, perhaps more than ever: for Marx, the question of freedom should not be located primarily in the political sphere proper (Does a country have free elections? Are its judges independent? Is its press free from hidden pressures? Does it respect human rights?). Rather, the key to actual freedom resides in the “apolitical” network of social relations, from the market to the family (n.p).

It is this apolitical network of social relations in which IESL and GCE is embedded. Like Vrasti (2012), I use this realm of ‘apolitical’ life to expose the particular way disability is used to construct a certain type of subjectivity. I seek to identify disruptions to this construction, and to make a contribution in the project of imagining what a global citizenship education *otherwise* can become (Andreotti, 2010).

Terms I Employ

The number of terms that are used to talk about international experiences in this space is overwhelming. This study will specifically focus on encounters in the space of volunteer abroad, international experiential service learning (IESL) and global citizenship education (GCE), acknowledging that these spaces are nebulous and take on different forms depending on who is representing them, when, and where. The term voluntourism, is born out of tourism studies, to describe the experiences of those traveling to a geographical space for a specific tourism experience, one that includes volunteering on specific projects such as community-based or environmental work (Mostafanezhad, 2014; Vrasti, 2012). In tourism studies literature, it is imagined as “a form of alternative tourism that creates the kinds of encounters that foster mutual understanding and respect” (Lyons et al., 2012: 362). In the critical literature these experiences work as “an innovative strategy of government reflective of contemporary transformations in capitalist production, consumption and citizenship practices” and a “neoliberal strateg[y] of subject formation” (Vrasti, 2012: 12). I use Vrasti’s understanding of the term to unpack and interrogate the kinds of encounters that occur in this space.

The goal of experiential education is to make room for students to “mak[e] meaning out of direct experience. The meaning that comes out of EE can be academic, personal and/or professional” (Tiessen & Huish, 2013: 4-5). The model of experiential education, as a component of academic studies, was popularized through David Kolb and Ron Fry’s 1974 experiential learning model “focused on experience, observation of - and reflection on - that experience, understanding abstract concepts based on that reflection, the testing of new concepts, followed by repetition of the process” (Tiessen & Huish, 2013: 5). Closely linked is the field of service learning, in which students engage in some type of service work that meets an agreed upon community need, and then bring back reflections on this activity to deepen their learning of course content, and throughout this process are extending their sense of citizen responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995).

Important to this study is the larger framework of humanitarianism, as the projects of IESL and GCE are rooted in this larger project and way of understanding ourselves and our relationships to the *other*. David Jefferess’s (2013) work on the humanitarian relation argues that the relationship between the humanitarian and the one who is being helped, is the “already known,” informed by deeply held narratives and images of the *other* and of

ourselves as helpers. Leila Angod (2015) theorizes this relation as “a relation of care between two bodies, one who is figured as modern and benevolent through an expression of care towards another who is figured as pre-modern and in need. Both of these figures take shape through the relation of care” (p. 20). She employs Chouliaraki’s (2013) “idea of the post-humanitarian subject as one who “situates the pleasures of the self at the heart of moral action” (p. 4), and who abandons justice “in favour of a new emotionality of the self” (Angod, 2015: 20). I too explore the centrality of the self in these encounters as an individual focus that works to sideline and diminish the historical forces of disablement, rendering the Northern self the ultimate carer or saviour of the disabled Southern *other*. In the context of IESL and GCE, Jefferess (2013) argues that we don’t just have to undo the constructed and “already known” humanitarian relation in intellectual ways, through critical pedagogy in the classroom, making known the inequality inherent in these constructions, but also in affective ways, unpacking and undoing how students are *feeling* these relations. The feeling of the pleasures of the self is seducing, and indeed encounters facilitated in IESL are explicitly made to be pleasurable and palatable. Experiencing poverty becomes about the Northerner experiencing the poverty of *others* and not about the *others* themselves.

The terms Global North and Global South are used to make known the spaces in which these encounters take place, between bodies that are marked by Northern privilege and bodies that are marked by Southern marginalization. Following Shaun Grech’s use of Dados and Connell’s (2012) work, I do not take these constructions as dichotomized spaces, but to “denote an emphasis on ‘geopolitical relations of power’” (2015: x). I consider how power and wealth is concentrated in the North (historically the colonizers), and the South has historically and continuously been colonized. However this must be complicated further by recognizing that there is a need to imagine Souths and not a singular South (Goodley 2011; Grech 2015). The encounters studied within this research are between bodies from these specific spaces. As this is a study that asks about encounters in specific spaces and between certain bodies, the centrality of place matters. This is all embedded in work from postcolonial theorist, Edward Said (1987), who made known the ways that Western societies depend on the construction of the *other* as different and threatening, at the same time romanticizing them. We see this so clearly in the encounters in this study: the disabled body as frightening, but also the romanticization of care that can be bestowed upon this body by the Northern young person.

Sara Ahmed's (2004) work on affective economies contributed to the discussion on which bodies are 'allowed' to do what in North South encounters. She asks, "[h]ow do emotions work to align some subjects with some others and against other others?" (p. 117). In the field of IESL and GCE, the economy of pity has scripted the disabled Southern body as in need of saving, fixing, educating, helping, and as made better by the able-bodied Northern body, which is the one that employs the pity. Ahmed explains, "In such affective economies, emotions do things, and they align individuals with communities—or bodily space with social space—through the very intensity of their attachments" (p. 119). So the emotions of pity allow able-bodied Northerners to imagine their body as justified in traveling to the Global South to help the Disabled *other*. Indeed, the calls from the IESL and GCE programs use emotion to call young people to this mission. The emotion of pity allows the Northern body to imagine that the Southern *other* needs help and that they are uniquely equipped to be the one to give that help.

These encounters are all taking place in the current phase of capitalism, which is characterized by the far-reaching and insidious system of neoliberalism. I work from Vrasti's (2012) understanding of neoliberalism, influenced by Foucault, as

a set of power relations that extends the logic of market relations to the entire social field, from macroeconomic policies to public policy, education, labour, recreation and personal conduct informs the analysis. The market becomes both the power of formalizing state and society and the standard of truth against which these should be measured (p. 20).

The intimate ways in which neoliberalism governs our lives, and relationships to ourselves and others. Central to this study is understanding how "subjectivity, our most intimate and private sphere of existence, does not lie 'outside' the purview of power, but is intensely governed" (Rose 1991: 1 in Vrasti, 2012: 20). I draw on Vrasti's (2012) revelation that we have not just given up passively to neoliberalism, "as much as we have become emotionally invested in it" (p. 137). She is asking us to reflect on our deepest "emotional and political investments" (137) in the systems of inequity that govern our lives. This study does this in the specific space of the encounter between the Northern young person, imagined as able-bodied helper, and the disabled Southern *other*. This study works to understand the ways in which these encounters are taking place in neoliberal times, as we are invested in specific emotional and political narratives of helping, caring, and saving the *other*, and ways that this works to form certain subjectivities. I use Vrasti's (2012) understanding of subject

formation, where “subjection is the process through which individuals come to understand themselves, their position and possibilities for action in the world” (p. 128). So subject formation is the ways in which we make sense of the world, and how we imagine acting in the world. This study looks at the site of IESL and GCE as experiences that work to produce these certain kinds of subjectivities.

I employ the terms normative mainstream, or just mainstream, when talking about IESL and GCE programming. Stein, Andreotti, Bruce and Suša (2016) provide us with a social cartography of four articulations of internationalization in the field of Higher Education that help explain normative or mainstream IESL and GCE programs. They outline four articulations of internationalization, two of which are normative mainstream and two which are radical alternatives. The first two characterize what I am labeling mainstream: internationalization for the global knowledge economy and internationalization for the global public good. The first frames internationalization as a way to become more competitive in the global economy, a way for Northerners to become marketable and more valuable as workers under Capital. The second frames internationalization as a way to reproduce citizens who will contribute to the global public good, for example, extending democracy and prosperity. This framing does not question the logic of Capital, the dominant norms of modernization, or the benevolence of this pursuit of knowledge. I understand mainstream IESL and GCE as operating within the above frames, deeply invested in the reproduction of the system of neoliberal Capital.

I use the term relational model to explain the value difference of the Intercordia Canada model in relation to the mainstream model, with the emphasis placed on the intentionality of being in relation with, in solidarity with the *other* (Springer, 2016). The framing of the relational model is one that allows for a mutuality of learning and giving, in contrast to the above mainstream framing that structures the relationship as one of the Northern student engaging in international programming to further economic, political and modernization systems. I use the term radical to deconstruct the ways in which IESL and GCE have been constructed. A call to the root or foundation (Leddy 2005) of a possibility that is different than the mainstream, the becoming of an emancipatory inclusivity. Paulo Freire signals to this possibility with his assertion that radicalness is “nourished by a critical spirit, is always creative... radicalization criticizes and thereby liberates” (1970: 37). A commitment to being radical is one that engages in “the effort to transform concrete,

objective reality.” (Freire 1970: 37). Here, the reality is IESL and GCE. The theme of being radical has been with me throughout my doctoral studies. I wrote my foundational comprehensive paper on Critical Theory and entitled it “The Rational as Radical.” In it, I explored the idea that in our current phase of capitalism, where material conditions are deeply inequitable, the uncovering of oppression, the rational, is imagined as a radical undertaking. Freire (1970) reminds us that the radical is not one who imagines oneself as a liberator of the oppressed, but as one who commits to solidarity alongside the oppressed, rooted in acts of love.

Finally, the understanding of disability and impairment are essential for this study. As this is a study that takes up narratives in diverse cultural and geographical spaces, the constructions of both terms are contentious and malleable. I understand both terms as fluid, constructed, different in different contexts and cultures, as relating to neoliberalism and systems of power, and in constant flux and shift. Goodley (2011) makes known the uneven and contradictory nature of disability, stating that while it is more present in geographical spaces that experience poverty, violent conflict, malnutrition and child labour, it is also everywhere because of a rise in labels in our medicalized and administrative systems of organization. Going back to the formative distinction between impairment and disability, we turn to Disabled People’s International’s definition:

Impairment: is the functional limitation within the individual, caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment.

Disability: is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of community on an equal basis with others due to physical and social barriers (DPI, 1982 in Goodley, 2011: 8).

In this early conceptualization of disability and impairment, “disability is seen as resulting from practices of structural, social and attitudinal impediments to the full inclusion of people with impairments” (Goodley, 2011: p.1391). Scholars in the field of critical disability studies are pushing this understanding further, taking up the ways in which impairment is constructed and changing. A Foucaudian analysis would posit that any “biological facts” have been constructed/moulded over time by institutional and discursive forces, arguing “impairment and disability are two sides of the same socially constituted coin” (Goodley, 2011: p.115), and the non-natural production of impairment through conflict, environmental degradation and the violation of human rights and the Northern role in this production (Soldatic, 2013).

Contributions of this Project

This topic merits study as there are significant ethical, pedagogical, practical and human concerns in the area of IESL and GCE programs for post-secondary students from the Global North (Andreotti & deSouza, 2012; Benham Rennick & Desjardins, 2013; Cook, 2004; Heron, 2007; Jefferess 2012; Journal of Global Citizenship & Equity Education, 2012 Special Edition; Vrasti, 2012). There is a major gap in the critical IESL and GCE literature in attending to disability. The intersection of disability has yet to be taken up, and the implications on subject formation and reproduction of disablement, and the hidden sites of production of impairment necessitate this critical inquiry. A Critical Disability lens helps us understand IESL and GCE in more complex ways. Narratives around helping, curing and rehabilitating are strong in marketing and programming in the field of IESL and GCE, and damaging constructions of disability as individual, steeped in the charity and medical models, are produced and reproduced. Subjectivities that, instead of valuing or complicating difference, essentialize difference are reproduced (Tarc, 2001). This study works towards the uncovering of the ways disablement works under neoliberalism, and ways we can engage students in IESL and GCE differently, which involves constructing disability in new ways and recognizing our intimate role in its production and reproduction.

This study informs the field of Critical Disability Studies through its engagement in a political and social analysis that places disability at the center. Devlin and Pothier (2006) explain that “critical disability theory is not just political analysis, it seeks political transformation” (p. 12). It also engages in seeking transformation of disabling narratives through the documentation and exploration of alternative ways of being and engaging in the field of IESL and GCE. This study recognizes the ways in which narratives are disabling and examines how these narratives operate in volunteer abroad encounters. Goodley (2011) reminds us that critical disability theory starts with disability, but that it cannot end with it, it must remain “ever vigilant of political, ontological and theoretical complexity” (p. 157). This study works to attend to these intersecting complexities. Critical Disability Theory is new, contested and evolving. In this study I work to theorize the pedagogical space of IESL and GCE as a contribution to the project of a complex conceptual understanding of the ways oppression of those with disabilities operates (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009). This study engages in the tangled fields that make up the critical study of disability, applying a critical disability framework to the field of IESL and GCE, to bring to light the ways in which disablement is being reproduced, and it asks how we can imagine in this space differently.

This work engages in a specific area, in a specific way, and is embedded in the bigger and longer project of change and emancipation for those excluded and disabled by neoliberalism.

I am not interested in countering the dangerous and damaging IESL and GCE narratives with ‘good’ ones. I am interested in exploring the complexity of poverty, global citizenship, making relationships with those who are different, and revealing the humanity that is obscured by the ‘one story’ that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie so eloquently makes known in her celebrated Ted Talk (2009). It is precisely the complexity and the embeddedness of the North in the lives of those in the South, through ongoing systems of domination, colonialism and imperialism, that I am interested in understanding. I center disablement and produced impairment in my analysis, taking up the specific ways disability is employed and constructed as a call to save, fix, and civilize Southern *others*. Encounters facilitated through IESL and GCE programs often obscure inequity and complexities in order to make the experiences palatable and fun for students from the Global North, and work towards a specific formation of the Northern subject. In these encounters, complexity is erased, simple stories about helping and fixing are celebrated, and changing the world becomes an easy and indeed fun activity that those from the North are entitled to participate in.

Need for Pedagogical Interventions

Educators must build alternatives, disruptions, within the growing uncritical IESL and GCE field, and create programs that really challenge students, engage them to think critically, allow them to meet and understand those who are different on the terms of those from the South, and understand these encounters as existing in larger disabling systems. Opportunities to destabilize knowledge, ideas of - and who can hold - knowledge, and the creation of spaces to create new narratives for hope and a future resisting the project of dehumanizing neoliberalism is necessary work for educators to be actively engaging in. The critical literature in this field is taking up complex discussions and theorizing about the decolonization of the space of IESL and GCE. These discussions need to include disability, for decolonization cannot be realized without taking up contributions and theorizing from critical disability scholars and activists. The processes and logics of colonization and neo-colonization are intimately tied to disability and the production of impairment. Pedagogical interventions must include disability as a site of oppression and violence.

To illustrate the contemporaneity of the need for pedagogical interventions, I want to share a story from a recent encounter I had with one of Intercordia's international partners in the Dominican Republic. The organization is called *el Federación de Campesinos Hacia el Progreso*, the Federation of Farmers Towards Progress, a collective of *campesinos* in the mountains of Bonao, Dominican Republic. For over thirty years they have been struggling to protect their lands and way of life and against the degradation of the environment by large state-sponsored hydroelectric projects and transnational resource extraction activities (many of them Canadian mining companies, including Barrick Gold). It is a collective struggle that has resulted in many sacrifices and incidence of corporeal violence; one of the founders of the *Federacion* survived an assassination attempt when a bomb was thrown through his car window. The *Federacion* has recently started an eco-tourism project that brings economic benefits to the community as well as tourism and IESL and GCE groups to the remote mountain community. One such group is Global Glimpse, an organization engaged in GCE for young American high school students. Interestingly, one of their main tenets is to make this education accessible for all, and accordingly they operate a sliding economic scale with some participants paying \$500 and others \$4000 (Global Glimpse, 2016).

As a part of their 'community work' at the *Federacion*, the young participants of Global Glimpse painted a small wall painting that includes their organization's name and year they painted it. The main part of the painting is a quote, dedicated to the "children in *Yuna Alto*," the region in which the *Federacion* sits. The quote reads: "He who doesn't live to serve, doesn't serve to live." This type of activity is typical in these short-term (in this case they spend one day doing 'community work' at the *Federacion*) GCE programs in the South. The painting of walls by young people with no painting skills or artistic ability seems to be *de rigour*; I am sure the host communities wonder why the Northerners insist on engaging in this labour when they are clearly not adept at it. Returning to the quote chosen by Global Glimpse to be painted at this *Federacion* of farmers struggling against transnational mining companies headquartered in the North, I wonder whether this would be a quote that young people in the United States might write on the wall of a preschool in Idaho or St Louis? How were they imagining the children of the South and their place or value in the world through this quote? Who do they imagine these children should serve? How might the reality that these children and their families live actually be serving the interests of global capital through their oppression and poverty? Secondly, the desire to have their work recognized and branded with their organization's name sits in stark contrast to the two large

murals painted on two other walls in the *Federacion* compound, one a homage to a *campesina* who had contributed many years to the struggle, who had died. The other large mural is of the mountain where *Federacion* is located, including a school that represents one of the tangible results of the struggle against large-scale state energy projects that threatened to push the *campesino* families off their land. The mural represents this historical collective struggle intimately lived by the bodies who live on this land, who are disabled by the inequities of transnational Capital.

When I saw the mural painted by the Global Glimpse volunteers, new since I had visited last, I asked the director of the *Federacion*, the same man who had survived an assassination attempt for his opposition to transnational mining in the region, why he thought that the young volunteers from Global Glimpse felt the need to brand their work in such a prominent way. He laughed, and said, ‘you know how the gringos are.’ His answer is telling, he didn’t want to outright critique the ‘good works’ of those coming to ‘help.’ This ‘help’ brings needed material benefits to the *Federacion* and also the hope of what might materialize in the future. But his answer was clear, the gringos feel the need to highlight their work, to make known that they did something, that it was them that bestowed such a gracious gift. As I write this, the much-lauded ‘historic’ trip of former United States President Barak Obama to la Habana, Cuba just concluded. I followed the narratives from the mainstream media closely; the Western obsession with portraying Cuba as an object awaiting the benevolence of the great white saviour from the North to open the doors to modernity, progress and rescue them from isolation. The whole time I wondered what the now late Fidel Castro had to say. Shortly after, he published his response, a sharp postcolonial critique, “We don’t need the empire to give us anything” (2016).

My Engagement and Commitment in the Field

This work is deeply personal and intimate, which is probably the case for most intense academic labours. I wrote this study in the first person. I choose to do this as I am, and have been, intimately shaped by my own IESL experiences and education, my lifetime in L’Arche, and formation and involvement with Intercordia since 2005. This lived perspective is critical to my academic understanding of the field. I cannot imagine this work not being written in the first person; my personal investment is strong and shapes my research questions, methods and analysis. I work to apply theory to personal experiences, of which my own experience greatly influences my perspective and understanding.

To position myself in this work I would like to tell a number of stories that say something about me, and therefore my positionality. Firstly, I am a child of L'Arche. L'Arche is an international federation of intentional communities of people with and without intellectual disabilities. It was founded by Jean Vanier in 1964 in Trosly-Breuil, France and has grown to 149 communities in 38 countries (L'Arche, 2016). I was born into the community of L'Arche Daybreak in Richmond Hill, Ontario. My family lived in a L'Arche home with core members, people with intellectual disabilities, until I was about 8 years old, when we moved into a home that only my family shared. Our lives were intimately lived in community until I was in high school, with both of my parents in leadership positions and intentional about bringing up our family in the community. So, I was formed as a person in L'Arche, with the philosophies, pedagogies and values of Vanier and L'Arche as the truths of the world and my life. I have not known a life that does not include L'Arche. I struggle with how this looks as an adult, and now as I bring up my own child, in a very different time. L'Arche is not the counter-cultural space it once was. I also struggle to work through the critiques of the L'Arche model from those in the academy, as I am now engaged in the field of Critical Disability Studies.

In 2005, in my third year of my undergraduate degree in Social Justice and Peace Studies at King's University College, I enrolled in the Intercordia Canada program, founded by Jean Vanier as a sister organization to L'Arche. I spent three months living in a rural village in Ecuador. I volunteered in a local school and lived with a wonderful host family who welcomed me, taught me Spanish and treated me as a part of their family. About a month into the program, I lost vision in both eyes. My host family did not know what to do. They applied natural herbal remedies. They advised me to rest, to be in the dark. They were worried that my mysteriously acquired impairment would be judged as their inability to care for me. I have a memory of taking the bus alone to a local clinic. This was followed up by seeing a neurologist in the capital city, Quito. My comprehensive health insurance kicked in and I was afforded the best of the best medical care. I was diagnosed with optic neuritis. I was told it was probably the precursor to Multiple Sclerosis. The top neurologists in the country attended to me during my weeklong stay at the large private hospital. I began to hear so many strange narratives from other Canadian participants and those in Canada: Go home, you can't stay here and deal with this, not in the South.

About two weeks after I was admitted to hospital I recovered my vision. I struggled with this web of privileged power relations that I found myself in. I had access to the best medical care, care that my host family would never have access to. My host family had come to visit me in the hospital and my host sister was so excited to play in the warm water in my private bathroom; at home there is only cold water from the tap. Other participants' host families took hours-long bus rides to come and visit me, bringing gifts of food as hospitals that serve the economically-poor do not provide things like food. One must bring their own.

In the years after my experience in Ecuador I developed a deep anxiety about the possibility of the optic neuritis leading to Multiple Sclerosis and what that might mean. This was a natural reaction to the possibility of impairment in a society that viscerally avoids it. What in me was so terrified of impairment that I developed anxiety and panic attacks? This is something I started to reflect on at an Intercordia retreat with other facilitators who have worked with Intercordia for many years. Many of them have lived and worked in L'Arche as well. I began to revisit my time in Ecuador by reading through my journal, and applying critical disability theory to my experience. This is why I am interested in this work. What does it mean to construct these binary narratives of the able-bodied from the North coming to help the Southern disabled *other*? What spaces for learning do these binaries shut down or work to make absent? Which subjectivities are celebrated and which are marginalized?

After my Master's work in the Netherlands, I returned to Canada and began to work with both L'Arche and Intercordia. I feel so close to both missions, but I have chosen them this time, whereas L'Arche was not a choice as I grew up. I wanted to live in L'Arche as an adult; so I researched L'Arche in the South and felt drawn to Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. I was an assistant in the community for six months, living some of the most difficult and joyful moments in my life. I met my partner there. We now have a daughter together. I had a deep desire for my doctoral dissertation work to be an ethnographic project, engaged in extensive fieldwork in the South. There is a major need for research *with* hosts, but life got in the way. Just after proposal defense I gave birth to Saskia Yvonne Mojica Vorstermans and traveling to the field for an extended time was not feasible.

Historical Beginnings

This study is not with Southern hosts; instead it is with student participants from the North. This is where I am positioned. I am an able-bodied woman from the North, formed in L'Arche, and deeply invested in the mission of Intercordia. I hold the deep conviction that relationships across difference are indeed possible and that they can be sites of deep challenge and learning, when they are mutual and reciprocal. I live with the constant tensions of how to live these relationships well, how to do so in ways that do not deny or ignore colonial and violent histories, and how to call others to engage in this space in more just ways.

This study went through many transformations. My desire to do research in this area is rooted in the desire to work with host communities to uncover the impact of IESL and GCE on their lives. The following discussion is from a prior study used as the stepping-stone for this study. I engaged in a large multi-site study in the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Honduras and Rwanda, with co-researcher, Katie MacDonald, from the University of Alberta. We worked with 4 research assistants, Hannah Deloughery, Rosana Donoso Barredo, Melana Roberts and Marian DeCouto on a study titled *The Absent Hosts and 'Caregivers': Narratives from those in the Global South who host university students from the Global North*. We completed research in five different countries that are, or have, hosted Intercordia students. I was in Dominican Republic, Hannah was in Ghana, Melana was in Ecuador and Rosana was in Honduras and the following year, Marian was in Rwanda. All of the researchers, including myself, worked with the Intercordia students as mentors over the 3-month overseas placement. This allowed researchers to have access to the potential research participants. Each researcher identified potential research participants in the local host organization, host work placements, and host families and asked them to complete a research questionnaire. Questionnaires were completed individually by the participants, or in connection with the researcher. Understanding that some of the hosts have an indigenous first language, or were not able to read or write, or read and write minimally, we offered both oral consent options as well as for the research assistants to complete the survey with them and take notes. Languages used were: English, French, Spanish and Dangme. Research subjects were not identified; they remained anonymous.

The rationale for this multi-sited preliminary study was to engage in research that specifically asked hosts about their experience of the rising phenomenon of IESL, GCE, and

cross-cultural learning in university education across North America and Europe. Canadian universities are pushing to internationalize education (both through receiving international students and sending students abroad), and are increasingly encouraging students to incorporate international experiences into their academic ones (Shubert, Jones & Desai Trilokekar 2009). The large number of university students now volunteering, living, and completing education programs overseas has grown significantly in the last decade (Ibid). There is a large body of research looking at the experiences of the students from the Global North, focusing on how to make programming better for students, how to make the learning deeper for students, and how to better accommodate students in these programs (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart 2002, 2010; McGee & Santos, 2004; O'Sullivan, 1999; Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight, 2005; Young & Cassidy, 2004). There is little research, however, on the effects of this large student presence in the host communities that welcome them for this learning experience. This study asked about the experiences of those who open their homes to these students, who care for them, welcome them to their tables, into their places of work, and into their lives. We were interested in understanding the impact that this type of experience for young people from the Global North has on the lives of Southern hosts as well as on the lives of their families and communities, and what hosts thought about these encounters. We asked about challenges, the benefits they experienced, and the expectations they had of the encounters.

It was overwhelmingly clear that host families and community members experienced the strength of the Intercordia program in the encounters with participants as relationships of mutuality (MacDonald & Vorstermans, 2015). Hosts told us that they engaged in the program because it allowed for, or made space for, encounters of mutuality, a period of time to learn from one another, to share more about each other's worlds and build relationships. It became evident that what host families experienced and wanted from these encounters was not what mainstream global citizenship and international experiential education and volunteering overseas programming was fostering or enabling. From this research study, we determined that the following themes were important for hosts in the Global South: mutuality in relationships, benefits of social capital (two-way flow of benefits, not just benefits for participants from the North), and the sharing of world views (MacDonald & Vorstermans, 2015).

When designing this doctoral research project, I decided to gather narratives from Intercordia student alumni. I did this for a number of reasons, both practical and intellectual. Firstly, practically I was unable to engage in a significant period of fieldwork with hosts in the South. This made a deeper ethnographic study with hosts impossible. I had just had a baby and it was not practically or financially feasible. Secondly, I understood the locus of the problem of IESL and GCE is in the programs developed in the North. We carry the responsibility to change the way we are engaging in IESL and GCE. I wanted to be a part of thinking through why we need to make these changes and imagine how this can be done. Lastly, I wanted my research to be critical, to be of some use in the path to change, to reveal the narratives of disability in IESL and GCE, and to imagine how this can be disrupted. This all led me to identifying alumni of Intercordia as those I wanted to talk to. Like Vrasti (2012), my work does include the *other*, the subaltern, they are not erased in this project. The preliminary multi-sited study shaped the questions I asked my research participants. I asked about moments of mutuality and encounters with *others*, so the stories and reflections are about *others*. Research participants often reflected on their impacts on the Southern *others*, and I asked about how they thought *others* experienced these moments of mutuality. This is of course very different than asking Southern *others* for their experiences of these same moments, or moments with Northern participants. The work of Katie MacDonald (2016) puts these two perspectives of the encounter in conversation and helps us to understand the possibilities for learning within the tensions of these understandings.

Outline of this study

This dissertation is made up of an introduction, four chapters and a conclusion, each one taking up a specific piece of the study. It begins with an introduction, which includes the research question that guides this study, the terms employed throughout, my contributions to the fields of IESL and Critical Disability Studies, and the need for pedagogical interventions in this field. I end this chapter with my positionality and engagement in the field, as it intimately shapes this research, and the historical beginnings of this study. Chapter One outlines the cultural and political context for this work, the theoretical framework, a literature review focused on the tensions in the reformist literature and the more radical literature calling for an unsettling of the field. Then the normative truths that underpin and produce these encounters between Northerner and Southern *other* are outlined and the argument that they act to facilitate a specific form of subject formation under neoliberalism is taken up. How these encounters work to obscure the structural

process of poverty, disablement and inequity and reinforce damaging and disabling discourses is theorized. It ends with drawing attention to the missing disability analysis in the existing critical literature. In Chapter Two the encounter with the disabled Southern *other* in mainstream IESL and GCE programs and the ways in which this works in forming certain subjects under neoliberalism is theorized. It explores the able/disabled binary at play in this space, coupled with the intentional obscuring of the Northern role in the production of impairment. The ways in which the individualization of disability is constructed in the space of IESL and GCE are outlined, highlighting the dangerous and disabling discourses it reproduces. It explores the specific invitation to help the disabled Southern *other* and the ways that this reproduces disabling subjectivities.

Chapter Three forwards the methodology for this study, starting with the approach to researching North/South encounters and my positionality as researcher is taken up. The case study of Intercordia Canada, a relational model of IESL is highlighted, discussion the role it holds in this work. I then work through the access, ethics, qualitative interview design and process, and data analysis procedures. I end with the limitations of this study and a note on gratitude. In Chapter Four the case study of Intercordia Canada's relational model is introduced, with an overview of the model and program foundations. The model is one that invites Northerners to a different encounter with difference, an invitation to relationality. A relationality that asks Northern participants to *be with* the other, and not move to *do for*. A relationality that highlights the necessity of mutuality in relationship, that there is work to do in recognizing our own investments in narratives of who is a helper, and who needs help and ways we can work to dismantle these damaging binaries. It then moves into an analysis of the disruptive narratives from interviews with Intercordia student participants. It explores the larger themes of difference, vulnerability, mutuality, disability, and reactions to disruptions from the Southern *other*. It explores narratives about uncertain subjectivities and anxiety that characterize the unstableness of difficult learning. It ends with a conversation on the irreconcilable tensions of IESL and GCE learning in neoliberal times.

The Conclusion opens with a conversation meant to stimulate a discussion on how educators can work to develop pedagogy that doesn't reinforce ableist tropes and normativities and makes known the processes of disablement. It posits that this process is made impossible through three overarching discourses and praxis in the field of IESL and GCE; ableist constructions and scripts, the explicit lack of a critique of disablement, and the

constructed experience as one designed and created for the able-bodied participant from the North. It posits four ways that educators might intervene in this disabling learning space, enabling deeper complexity; academic preparation rooted in intersectional analysis that includes disability, intentionality around vulnerability and mutuality in programming, the meaningful inclusion of Southern hosts in pedagogy, and a radical re-thinking of ethos of experiences in this space, with a focus on the destabilization of knowledge and being uncomfortable and the emancipatory possibility of disability as a way to introduce different ontologies and ways of being in the world. It dives into a discussion on tensions in engaging otherwise and alternative models as reproducing a neoliberal peace and not a rupture of the system. It works through my praxis in the field, the weaknesses and gaps of this work, areas for further research and ends with the entanglements and the moral consolations and desolations of engaging in a space so fraught with disabling and damaging discourses and knowledge hierarchies.

Chapter One: Theorizing encounters in IESL and GCE

One cannot criticize such morally good work - gasp! (Vrasti 2012).

The thought that this village should carry the youths' transformation.

Another colonial myth. . .

*The youth make one last orgy of consumption in the local market,
Then strap themselves safely in the seats of an Air Canada wide-body jet.*

Content that nothing has been disturbed (Shultz 2012: 172).

Introduction: Cultural and Political Context

The drive to internationalize the Canadian higher education experience is growing. In the 2006/2007 academic year, approximately 18,000 Canadian students participated in an international experience as a part of their University education (McRae 2013).

Internationalization of Canadian higher education institutions is becoming increasingly widespread, with 95% of university presidents in Canada citing fostering “global competencies” of graduates as top institutional priorities (Larkin, 2012). The expansion of global citizenship learning and experiential education programs are expanding across Canada’s higher learning landscape (Tiessen & Epprecht, 2012). Service learning, experiential learning, and cross-cultural learning are being promoted as an essential part of university and college education across North America and Europe. Canadian universities are pushing to internationalize education (both through receiving international students and sending students abroad), and are increasingly encouraging students to incorporate international experiences into their academic experience (Shubert, Jones & Desai Trilokekar 2009, Tiessen & Epprecht, 2012).

The motivations for this growth are financial as much as they are pedagogical; “Universities with strong study and volunteer abroad programs now tend to attract more students . . . for Canadian university presidents in this decade it is grow or die” (Desjardins, 2013: 217). The experiential learning program as formalized into academic university learning started in the 1990s and is growing rapidly (Tiessen & Huish 2013: 6). Universities Canada released a 2014 report on the state of internationalization in Canadian universities, reporting that 96% of Canadian universities have internationalization as a priority, up from 5% in 2006 -a drastic jump. The process is accelerating, with 89% of universities reporting that they are increasing the pace of their internationalization process. Of the universities

with international options, 67% offer service or international volunteering opportunities (Universities Canada 2014). While international experiences are expanding in North America, only 3.1% of full time undergraduate students actually go abroad (Universities Canada 2014: pg. 1). So, while Global citizenship is a “primary mandate” of the North American university (Jefferess 2012: 29) the numbers of full time students engaging in formal experiences through the University are small. There are numerous parallel programs and experiences marketed to University students to engage in during their Spring break, Summer break and post-Undergrad; volunteer abroad, voluntourism, Church and missionary groups among them. There are associations that have been formed to provide lists of leading organizations and best practices in the field (MacDonald 2016). The formation of global citizens is characterized by the ethos of a “duty to protect, [a] humanitarian responsibility for the Other, that the solution to global poverty is the West’s young people volunteering and raising money for band-aid projects” (Jefferess 2012: 43). The project of global citizenship veils the material relationships that create privilege - those who then can be global citizens- and those who are in the position of needing help (Ibid). Gada Mahrouse (2014) reminds us that “the idea of global citizenship and acting or intervening across, without or beyond borders has become an axiom so imbued with righteousness that it tends to remain largely outside of the purview of critique” (p. 160).

The University has the responsibility to provide meaningful and critical academic, but also experiential, experiences for these young people. This is a stated goal of Canadian Universities. The Association of Canadian Deans released an Accord on the Internationalization of Education in 2014, seeking to “stimulate discussion of critical issues and institutional responsibilities in the internationalization of education, and to give careful consideration to representations of marginalized individuals, groups and communities” (pg. 1). They outline five principles that they promote in this area, one being “reciprocity as the foundation for engaging in internationalization activities” (pg. 6). The rise of internationalization on Canadian University campuses is moving forward with great speed and serves a number of goals. The current phase of capitalism is demanding more flexible, multicultural and cosmopolitan workers, and IESL and GCE is a way in which these subjects are being formed to meet these desired characteristics (Vrasti 2012).

A similar field of international experience relevant to this study is the field of volunteer tourism, which is highly marketed to Northerners. Leila Angod (2015) emphasizes

that international experiences “tend to be imagined, problematically, as social justice education” (p. 76). She highlights an example of a We Day in Toronto to show how easy and fun it is to be a compassionate global citizen - it is a pleasurable experience. It becomes an experience steeped in affective pleasure that empowers and emboldens Northerners to help, save, and intervene in the Global South. Vradi’s (2012) *Volunteer Tourism in the Global South: Giving Back in Neoliberal Times* describes voluntourism as having its roots in colonial missionary projects. This new iteration is rooted in desires to do good and know the *other*. She argues that in our current educational climate international experiences are now seen as a “sensible investment in the future,” experiences that “good neoliberal subjects” are expected to complete (p. 1). She argues that voluntourism relies on “economic rationalizations and emotional dictums” (p. 3). Indeed, voluntourism “(re)produces subjects and social relations congruent with the logic of capital in *pleasurable* ways” (p. 4 *emphasis mine*). The experience of knowing global poverty is one marketed as fun, enriching and exciting for Northerners. Mary Mostafanezhad (2013) explains that voluntourism is envisioned as authentic tourism by the masses, and through these experiences “poverty has come to symbolize the “non-commercialized” and “natural world” (p.156). She posits that this conceptualization of poverty does not leave room for politicization or to ask questions about why poverty exists, why certain bodies experience poverty. This space for questioning is obscured by the “aesthetic pleasure of the experience” (p. 156).

Barbara Vodopivec and Rivke Jaffe (2011) highlight the problems with Northerners going into the South with no understanding of the specificities of the places they are going. Northerners have broad ideas around injustice and want to engage in international experiences in order to reduce inequity, but place is not central to their analysis. To them, the South is the South is the South - context and specificity of place does not matter. Northerners imagine the South as one monolithic geographical space characterized by injustice and inequity, but the contextual specificities and different historical processes are erased. Vanessa Andreotti (2016) takes up the concerns with ISEL and GCE educational practices in the Global South, using Thobani’s work on the construction of the Canadian subject as “law-abiding, caring, compassionate and committed to diversity and multiculturalism” (p.102). Necessary in this construction is the opposite construction, to mirror the Canadian exaltedness, the externalized *other* (which can be within or outside Canadian geographical space) who is imagined as unworthy. Hidden in this narrative is the colonial violence on which the Canadian state was created. David Jefferess (2008; 2012;

2013) demonstrates how the Me to We enterprise erases colonial violence in their particular process of subject-making, constructing the Canadian subject as benevolent and compassionate. The externalization of the *other* is reproduced in the language used by Northerners engaged in these experiences,

Participants refer to themselves as a group rather than individuals, using the words ‘us,’ ‘we’ and ‘our’ to emphasize their commonality. They also differentiate themselves from the people they are going to help. Rachel, a volunteer from New Zealand, was thrilled when she found out that John from the United Kingdom would be going to the same project in Kenya, commenting: ‘Good to know that I won’t be completely alone on the other side of the world’ (Vodopivec & Jaffe 2011: 121).

The North is the North is the North. Rachel imagines John as a kindred spirit before even knowing anything about him; his Northern identity trumps all other possible characteristics. The importance is that she will be with someone ‘like her,’ as opposed to alone amongst the imagined Southern *other* who is unlike her. A study of Northerners volunteering in agricultural work in Costa Rica found that student participants often desire to engage in transcultural communication or relationships, but that this ended up taking place with fellow Northern trip participants instead of with the local *other*. The study gives multiple reasons for this, among them being a “wariness of the local ‘other’ and the short length of the trip (Zavitz & Butz 2011: 427). The short temporal duration of the trip did not allow for the time that relationships of substance or mutuality necessitate.

Literature in the field of tourism has taken up the study of tourists who volunteer as a part of their travels (McGhee & Almeida 2004, Wearing & McGhee 2006, Wearing & Wearing 2013). The reasons why people engage in these experiences are similar to those of IESL and GCE: altruism, social interaction, self-development, professional development, and cultural immersion (Grabowski 2013). And while there has been movement to recognize that the enterprise of tourism privileges the experience of the Western tourist over the local host community (Jamal et al, 2006, Meyer, 2007, Torres & Momset 2005 in Wearing & McGhee 2013), the research in this field has primarily focused on how volunteer tourism is potentially beneficial to host communities (Wearing & Wearing 2013). Further, research that is done with host communities is mostly with community leaders, and not marginalized community voices, therefore reproduces certain narratives of those who hold power, and further marginalizing the marginalized (Wearing & Wearing 2013). Wearing and Wearing (2013) call for the need to pay attention to the ways volunteer tourism can

“perpetuate, or even exacerbate, racial and ethnic stereotypes” (p. 125). They explain that some studies (Griffin 2004, Simpson 2004, Raymond & Hall 2008b) have documented how volunteer tourism can “foster cultural misunderstandings” (p. 125). However, the euphemistic language of ‘misunderstandings’ masks the larger violence and damage that take place in this space.

Theoretical Framework

I am drawn to two different strands of theory that inform my thinking and writing in this area. Firstly, the materialist political economy field is essential for an understanding of what is happening in this space, in these specific encounters, under Capital and how this is structured in terms of power and material relationships of privilege and inequality. Secondly, literature from critical post-colonial scholars, theorizing race, gender and class in this space, is and has been essential in helping me to open my mind and ask questions that push me to new areas, and challenges about how Capital moves into spaces beyond the material, intimately working to produce specific subjectivities.

Wanda Vraști (2010b) explains that the links between material political economy theory and post-colonial theory can open a conversation about culture and identity, history and materiality, and the “question of solidarity seems like an interesting point to start this conversation: how can solidarity take hold between unequal parties? How is solidarity possible without a clear/common notion of an enemy Other? And whom should solidarity be responsible to(wards)?” (para. 23). I draw on these two theoretical frames as a conceptual framework for my analysis, to help us understand the need for disruptions in the increasingly neoliberal field of IESL and GCE. How can we imagine disruptions to the increasingly pleasurable IESL and GCE experience, making know the ways it reproduces the material poverty and disablement of others? How can we understand IESL and GCE as a space to highlight the lived and material tensions of this pleasure and disablement?

I understand postcolonial theory through Andreotti’s (2011) definition, which “sits in an ambivalent and conflictual space between a Marxist critique of capitalism, postmodernism and a specific form of identity struggle” (p. 142). Andreotti explains that postcolonial theory is to be used as a useful tool, and not as an absolute theory of truth. I employ theory throughout my study as a useful tool to examine power, knowledge production and discourses in the construction of the field of IESL and GCE and the neoliberal subjects it

(re)produces. Together, these theoretical strands enable me to think through the complex processes of disablement and marginalization of constructed and produced disabled bodies, the celebration and benevolence of the imagined able-bodied global citizens and their desire to help and care in these specific encounters facilitated through mainstream IESL and GCE programs. I draw from interdisciplinary fields, including critical pedagogy, critical IESL and GCE, critical disability, critical race, critical feminist and postcolonial theory to understand this complex and diverse space. I operate from a position of challenging the thinking that *any* grand or normative narrative is emancipatory. This is foundational in this space as the normative narratives that are at work in IESL and GCE reproduce disabling and individualizing constructions of impairment and disability. I attempt to remain in uncertainty, anxiety and constant self-reflexivity in my work, committed to the richness that this space can prompt. Vanessa Andreotti's (2001) use of postcolonial theory in a deeply material way, has guided my study, and my understanding of embodied relationships. Andreotti's imagining of postcolonial theory as "a set of extremely useful questions towards a way of thinking/feeling and forming relationships "otherwise" (i.e.: away from colonial violences)" (p. 142) has informed my questions in this study.

Employing Critical Pedagogy to Disrupt

I understand critical pedagogy as an embodied learning experience, as non-prescriptive, a space for engaging young people to "develop a social awareness of freedom" (Coles 2014: n.p). It is a space where educators must meet young people where they are at, with their lived experiences, history, resources and positionality, and engage them to think about power and its manifestations, and how it is integral in the oppression of certain bodies. Educators must work with young people to develop an interdependent understanding of freedom in ways that do not work towards the marginalization or oppression of others. This study takes its larger mission from the work of Paulo Freire (1970) and his imagining of the role of the oppressed or marginalized *other*. Central to Freire's thinking is that the oppressed must be foremost in their own emancipation, "no pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors" (p. 54). Freire defines oppression, as "prevent[ing] people from being more fully human" (p.56-7). A traditional charity model of IESL and GCE programs in which the volunteer from the Global North descends on an impoverished town in the Global South to emancipate them from their struggles is in complete opposition to Freire's conception of how the oppressed will create their own

emancipation and that of their oppressors. Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) is focused on action. He states that "the more radical the person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can better transform it" (p. 39). The beauty of Freire's argument lies in the fact that he explains that in the struggle of the oppressed towards their liberation, they will be the restorers of the humanity of both themselves and those who have oppressed them. This is the great historic task for the oppressed. The oppressed will not,

gain this liberation by chance but through the praxis of their quest for it, through their recognition of the necessity to fight for it. And this fight, because of the purpose given it by the oppressed, will actually constitute an act of love opposing the lovelessness which lies at the heart of the oppressors' violence, lovelessness even when clothed in false generosity (p. 45).

Here we see that this theme of love, the struggle towards liberation, and towards being more fully human, is rooted in love and not in hate of one's oppressor. The use of 'false generosity' is central here; the false generosity of IESL and GCE programs necessitates interrogation and uncovering. One of the pieces I identify as integral in this uncovering is the ways in which critical pedagogy can disrupt the normative IESL and GCE narratives. Henry Giroux (2015) calls for a pedagogy of disruption, one that "demands a critical and engaged interaction with the world we live in mediated by a responsibility for challenging structures of domination and for alleviating human suffering... that addresses the needs of multiple publics" (p. 3).

Using Critical Disability Theory to Deepen the Analysis

This study extends this critical scholarship by adding Critical Disability theory to think through these encounters in a new way, understanding how the construction of the disabled, Southern *other* is essential in the forming of the caring, able-bodied, global citizens, imagined as desired subjects in the current phase of capitalism (Vrasti 2012). The materialist Marxist work of disability theorists Mike Oliver, Colin Barnes and Vic Finkelstein is crucial in providing a base for my analysis in this field, but can only take us so far, as the reaches of Capital and the subjectivities formed under neoliberalism are complex, and work on many levels, which reach deep into the ways we structure knowledge, power, social relationships, and the ways in which we know ourselves. Critical Disability theory, informed by postcolonial theory, and the work of newer critical disability scholars like Karen Soldatic, Helen Meekosha, Dan Goodley and a diversity of others, has been essential for me to think through this transcultural space. For Goodley (2013), Critical Disability Theory provides the

space to illuminate the ways in which oppression is lived, but also a space where we can think through the hope for resistance. The subversiveness of Critical Disability theory, its roots in critical theory and dialectical thinking, are a natural framework to use to look at the issues of value, power and ‘helping’ or ‘curing,’ inherent in many IESL and GCE programs. This analysis is also embedded in the material structures of inequality and the processes that produce impairment and disability. This is extremely important, as for a long time injustices were seen as legitimate social processes to protect or care for people with disabilities.

Critical Disability Theory brings important critical areas of thought and discussion to the field of critical theory. It challenges emancipatory theory to transgress boundaries/borders/limits by pushing foundational thought around rationality, normalcy and a myriad of other constructions. It challenges any path (and not just the physical construction of the path) towards change to be truly inclusive to all and exposes the way historical paths have excluded people with disabilities. I am informed by Margrit Shildrick’s (2009) question of asking why people with disabilities are othered over other ‘*others*’? She articulates that disability is so unsettling for us because “nothing in the structure of Western culture prepares us for such an insight which has the capacity to deeply disturb all questions of self-identity” (p. 4). Her work complicates the idea of the supposed benefits of citizenship; and calls for a change in our cultural imaginary, with the need to revalue disability as “just another variant on the infinite modes of becoming” (p. 173). She employs Critical Disability Theory as a way to “not just change the lives of a significant minority of people who are categorized as dis/abled, but to disrupt the whole nature of the relationship between differently embodied subjects” (p. 173). How can theorizing about new ways of relating to disability in this space, and work to disrupt relationships, work towards building relationships *otherwise*? Shildrick’s work pushes us to think differently about difference and damaging normativities, and her work inspires me to imagine the “possibility for questions, directions and breakouts as yet unthought” (p. 171). This is what I work through in this study, asking how we can envision this space in different ways, rejecting simplistic binaries and disabling discourses that marginalize and oppress certain subjectivities while celebrating others. How can we think about the yet imagined in this space?

IESL and GCE programs present themselves as social justice experiences for young people that will be life-changing, provide opportunities to develop the identity of a global citizen, and work for change. The framework is clear, the charity model is unquestioned,

reified and reproduced. The critical scholarship in this field (Andreotti 2011, 2012, 2015, 2016; Heron, 2007; Jefferess, 2008, 2012; Mahrouse, 2010; Razack 2001, 2002, 2009; Vrasti, 2012) is robust, but thus far there has not been any research specifically using a critical disability lens or looking specifically at disability as a site of difference and oppression in these experiences. How does one's desire to 'do good' maintain the hierarchical relationship which ultimately reproduces disablement and individualizes disability? In order to work towards shifting the way we do IESL and GCE differently, we need to use an intersectional analysis, with disability included as a recognized site of oppression. The experiences and encounters in this field are gendered, raced, classed and disabled experiences. These lived sites of difference - disability, sexuality, race, class - need to be understood critically within the oppressive institutions that marginalize some identities over others, and the ways in which they intersect or hold each other up.

As I take up in the next section, the critical literature in this field has thus far built a very rich and textured intersectional analysis using gender, race, and class, but the attention to disability has yet to be worked on. Meekosha and Shuttleworth (2009) explain that critical social theory scholars are focused on the traditional axes of race, gender, sexuality and class, leaving out disability. Erevelles and Minear (2010) and Goodley (2013) argue that disability must be engaged with in all intersectional analysis. Erevelles and Minear (2010) use the example of a poor, disabled racialized woman who had an encounter with the police in which the police used disproportionate force and brutally ended her life. They explain that the site of disability cannot be seen as just a nuance in an analysis of difference, but rather "that in the violent annihilation of Eleanor Bumpers' being, disability as it intersects with race, class, and gender served more than just a "context" or "magnifier" to analyze the oppressive conditions that caused this murder" (p. 128). Disability is one of the sites of difference that made this woman's body a no(body) and a non-citizen, resulting in the actions taken by the police to end her life. They explain that within critical race scholarship, disability has often been taken as a biological fact, an abnormal and fixed state, aligning with the deficit model. They use an intersectional analysis to foreground the structures that oppress based on so-called deviance to the normative body: the white, able, male, privileged heteronormative body. Helen Meekosha and Russell Shuttleworth (2009) remind us that the emancipation of disabled people cannot be realized through neoliberal means. No policy or law within the neoliberal system can erase discrimination and reinscribe value to disabled people. Neoliberalism uses the logic of discrimination and the devaluing of the *other* to

function. The project of emancipation must not rely on those same logics. I extend this to argue that encounters structured under neoliberal understandings of IESL and GCE will reproduce disablement and marginalization.

Tensions in IESL & GCE Literature: Reform vs. Radical Unsettling

Vanessa Andreotti (2016b) reviewed the first two Canadian edited volumes examining IESL and GCE and its growth in higher education in Canada, *The World is my classroom: international learning and Canadian higher education*, edited by Joanne Renwick and Michel Desjardins and *Globetrotting or global citizenship? Perils and potential of international experiential learning*, edited by Rebecca Tiessen and Robert Huish. Her review highlights the larger fundamental tensions in the literature and in the lived practice of IESL and GCE in the Global North. There is a field of literature that advocates for a reforming of the practices in IESL and GCE - change without a radical unsettling of the oppressive forces that structure Capital and reproduce inequity. The other field of literature is focused on a radical unsettling of the foundational ethos of relations. The reformist field is characterized by a critique of unethical practices, and ways practice can be improved, but absent is the larger systemic analysis. This focus structures learning within the neoliberal, neocolonial global citizenship discourses that favour market solutions and the production of good global citizens ready to labour under the current phase of capitalism. There is no structural analysis questioning the problematic of this kind of learning and the violence it enacts on those in the South. The lack of structural analysis reproduces student learning that is “ethnocentric, paternalistic and self-serving forms of representation” (p. 114). This body of literature is highly focused on the experience of the Northern student and their developing of the self. It reproduces damaging discourses of the marginalized Southern *other* waiting for the benevolent, caring global citizen from the North to help, cure, save, and bring them joy.

The other field of literature - a critical literature - brings these problematic tensions to light by examining the deep desire to help, to cure, and to save. Using intersectional analysis, academics writing in this field theorize how the encounters and narratives in this space are raced, gendered, and classed (Andreotti 2011; 2012; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2016b, Andreotti et al. 2010, Andreotti & de Souza, Angod 2015, Cook 2004, Conran 2011, MacDonald 2014, Mahrouse 2010; 2011; 2014; 2015, Mostafanezhad 2013; 2013b; 2014, Simpson 2004; 2005, Vraști 2012). These academics work to make known the colonial,

neocolonial, imperialistic and ahistorical narratives and practices at play in the field, and call for new ways of imagining possibilities that are outside of the Western modernity project. They reject notions of linear progress, attend to diverse ontologies and ways of being in the world, and reject the market solutions that characterize and underpin simplistic programming in this field. These market solutions, characteristic of current late-phase capitalism, celebrate what Jefferess posits as the desire to ‘transcend affluence without giving it up’ (Jefferess 2012: 19 in Andreotti 2016b: 115). These solutions are rooted in the idea that we can use the very mechanisms that impoverish the South to alleviate poverty in the South; one of the many contradictions of capitalism.

Foundational to this work is Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, and Franz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, which gives understandings of how the West worked to construct the subaltern, or the *other*, as dangerous, threatening and at the same time exotic and romanticized. Gada Mahrouse uses Franz Fanon’s concept of encounter, one I find particularly helpful, to explain how we know ourselves through the *other*, in other words, the construction of the *other* is essential to us knowing ourselves (Mahrouse 2014: 16). Barbara Heron (2007) tells us that Northern development workers enter the spaces of the South with “assumptions of both home and the exotic carnivalesque” (p. 58), so, we make relationships with the Southern *other* that are both about the “exotic and the familiar - about objectifying and humanizing” (Heron 2007: 58). The following is a review of the critical literature in the field, paying particular attention to intersectional analysis of encounters as raced, gendered and classed, and the normative truths that structure relations in these encounters.

Normative Truths in IESL and GCE

There are a number of normative truths that work to structure the relations that facilitate the encounters structured in the field of IESL and GCE. Shultz (2012) highlights the foundational truth as one that the South is imagined as a space that enables the self-development of Northerners. IESL and GCE experiences are imagined as ones of self-development for the Northerner. In the conceptualization of these experiences by Northerners it is clear that the self looms large. Reflections highlighted on volunteer abroad websites, from those who have participated in these short-term volunteer programs, centre on the Northern self - “My CCS adventure that absolutely changed everything for me” and “Volunteering in India: My incredible experience” and “How volunteering inspired my

debut novel” (Cross Cultural Solutions 2016). Northerners are much more focused on personal growth in their experience than on contributing to the community, their supposed *raison d’être* for the experience (Sin 2009). Lille Chouliaraki (2013) asks how we perceive ourselves as moral actors, in the new “neoliberal lifestyle of ‘feel good’ altruism” (p. 4). She looks at how the self figures in the current times of humanitarianism, in light of significant media attention and populist appeals such as concerts and celebrity endorsements. She explains that the poverty of *others* becomes about how *I* feel. She identifies a shift from the focus on the structures that create inequity to one on the affective experience for the Northern self. This feel-good altruism is about the Northerner claiming that their lives have changed. This is a script that underpins the field, not whether one’s life will change, but how *much* it will change. Northerner’s time abroad in Africa is seen as a “time out” from their lives (Roddick 2014: 274). As if entering the geographical space of the South is a break from reality, a space that exists to facilitate this time out, a feel good time devoted to the development of the self.

Perversely, it also does not seem to matter whether the Northerner actually does any helping or giving back while abroad. Vrasti (2012) explains that the field’s *raison d’être* is to give back to those less fortunate, to help out and make a difference, but her research with volunteers in Guatemala and Ghana “shows that there is little evidence to substantiate these stories of sacrifice and compassion” (p. 28). She found that volunteers didn’t actually engage in the volunteer labour they signed up to do, the very labour they were attracted to in the first place. She notes that this doesn’t seem to matter in the world of volunteer abroad; the Northerners took pleasurable tourism trips in-country during their time in placement, made friendships with each other and were still admired by friends and family back home for their ‘sacrifice.’ Tristan Biehn (2014) explains that volunteer abroad programs serve to encourage youth to “consider self-improvement and individual efforts as solutions to issues of global inequalities, rather than addressing political and economic systems and underlying relationships of exploitation and domination” (p. 77). Biehn explains that acquiring the cultural capital that comes with this identity is something that requires little to no effort. It “is instant, effortless, and requires nothing more than the presence of a Western volunteer” (p. 87). The Northern body in the Southern space, with the desire to do good, is enough to acquire the humanitarian social capital. The experience of the Northern self is one structured on changing their lives through experiencing the poverty of *others*, but only in fun and

palatable ways, ways that are valued by Capital, ones that do not disturb structural or inequitable relations (Biehn 2014; Vrasti 2012).

An extension of the normative truth discussed above, is the certainty that Northerners will learn and be transformed just by *being* in the South. This space is imagined as inherently enabling of the self-transformation of the Northerner (Wearing & Neil 2001). Vrasti (2012) explains that “simply ‘living’ in Ghana, without the material comforts and emotional support of home, helped students and graduates develop sought-after cognitive, communicative and affective skills” (p. 123). Just by the mere move of entering the Southern space, the Northerner is made better. The pedagogy needed to facilitate learning is erased or deemed unnecessary. The learning will happen without intentional work. Heron (2007) speaks to this fantasy inherent in IESL and GCE and she “cautions educators not to expect once-and-for-all transformations of white subjects into accountable allies” and highlights that instead it is “long-term and never-complete nature of anti-oppression work” that is needed (p. 154).

Underpinning the field of IESL and GCE is the belief in the right for Northerners to enter into the lives of Southern *others* in order to learn about poverty and inequity. In Rebecca Teissen’s (2014) research with Barbara Heron, they interviewed 100 young Canadian volunteers who had been abroad on IESL programs. Tiessen identifies the most common motivations for student participation as cross-cultural understanding (34%) and to test an academic background or career choice (32%). Indeed, “almost all respondents agreed that their overseas experience has or will help them find employment” (Teissen 2014: 81). So it is about their self-development and social capital to position them as more attractive as workers in the neoliberal system (Vrasti 2012). Rebecca Teissen and Robert Hush (2014) explain that,

one of the key ethical considerations central to analyses of international experiential learning is the use of communities in Canada and the Global South as extensions of classroom spaces. . . we must also be careful not to treat communities in the Global South as laboratories for testing an academic or career choice (p. 3).

The shift to experiential education as a way for Northern students to experience realities first hand needs to be met with the ethical analysis of whose lives are facilitating this first hand learning. Vanessa Andreotti (2015) explains that the South is often imagined as a space that serves “as a repository of data for First world students to write papers about (and become

‘experts’ of)” (p. 223). This all takes place at the expense of the lives of “static and suspect local populations” (Vrasti 2012: 130). As Heron (2006) shows, the labour required to support the learning of the Northern student can take away from the work of the Southern NGO’s own work and “limit Southern people’s opportunities to claim or retain some epistemological space in which to analyze issues on their own terms” (n.p). The experience is oriented on the learning of the Northern student; their knowledge counts and thus reproduces Northern “superiority.”

Lastly, the moral imperative to help underpins the field; it is imagined that white (able-bodied) young Northerners have the moral imperative to help those in the South (Heron 2007). Fundamental to the knowing of the *other* in the field of IESL and GCE is the use of benevolence, or helping, as a way of relating to the Southern *other* (Jefferess 2001, Heron 2007). This imperative is often explicit, used as a call to Northerners to these experiences, and is reproduced in their tellings of their experiences; “volunteers themselves refer to Guatemala as a ‘country that needs help’” (Vodopivec & Jaffe 2011: 119). Barbara Heron’s (2012) work on Northern aid workers in the Global South, examines the construction of the white women development worker and our ‘desire to help’ in a critical way, interrogating this specific subjectivity and how it is constructed in and through these encounters that reproduce colonial relations. Leila Angod (2015) explains that Heron’s work “shows that the women’s desire to help forms a colonial continuity that repeats, (while also modifying over time), the ongoing foreclosure of African subjectivity in the making of empowered, morally good, white women” (p. 22). David Jefferess (2012) explains the mainstream construction of a global citizen as the Northern subject who “helps an unfortunate Other,” retaining the *other* as an “object of benevolence” (p. 27). He argues that this climate of benevolent helping obscures privilege and power - the reasons for why some live in poverty and others (us) don’t. He contends that not everyone can be a global citizen as it is only certain bodies (Northern) that are deemed able to even engage in this identity formation.

These are interconnected normative truths; firstly, the IESL and GCE experiences are imagined ones of self-development for the Northerner; secondly, Northerners will learn and be transformed just by *being* in the South; thirdly, Northerners have the moral right to enter into the lives of others in order to learn about poverty and inequity; and lastly, the imagined white (able-bodied) Northerners have the moral imperative to help those living in poverty

work in specific ways to reproduce subjectivities valued by Capital. I understand these truths as working to structure specific encounters that then work to form specific desired subjects under capital, reproducing damaging and disabling discourses that obscure structural processes of poverty, disablement and inequity.

IESL and GCE as Neoliberal Subject Formation

Gada Mahrouse (2008) argues that subjects are formed through knowledge-production practices, such as IESL and GCE. Social identities are produced through knowledge, therefore, we must critically examine and ask what knowledge is being produced through encounters in IESL and GCE. Wanda Vradi's (2010) writing on affective (caring) capitalism and voluntourism is central to thinking through subject formation in this space. Her work explores the current capitalist climate and the subjectivities it creates, explaining that the lines between the personal and the political are blurred. She uses the work of Slavoj Žižek to explain that "for every moment of exploitation, inequality, marginalization, or alienation, capitalist production offers twice as many outlets for freedom, equality, care, compassion, beauty and happiness" (p. 13). She examines volunteering overseas as one such outlet. It acts as a sort of steam valve to counter the individuality and oppressiveness of living in a capitalist system, and is also an expectation of the "good neoliberal subject" today (Vradi 2012: p. 2). She argues that voluntourism,

places young adults in trying circumstances and foreign settings, volunteer tourism, more so than university education or other forms of credentialed training. It can help individuals amass scarce social capital, demonstrate their cognitive and communicative skills and become the transgressive, risk-taking subjectivities multinational capital thrives on (p. 130).

Voluntourism is embedded in this caring system of neoliberalism. It works to produce subjects that will be good workers in our new economy; flexible, global, and innovative. Vradi explains that "social capital allows volunteers to become mobile and desirable, employable and experienced, comfortable and confident, esteemed and assertive" (p. 52-3). Kate Simpson (2005) affirms this particular subjectivity, noting that volunteer tourism is about "cultivating a 'professional, self-governing, careerist persona' (p. 447).

Vradi (2012) highlights the troubling dichotomous tension in this field. She explains that young people are attracted to this field because of the alienation they feel, and the resulting deep desire for community that neoliberalism does not know how to nourish. "Volunteer tourism seizes upon people's longing for community and sociality to teach

individuals how to apply entrepreneurial talents to fill the void left by a shrinking welfare state” (Vrasti 2012: 121). The ideals of young people are being commodified in the volunteer tourism machine (Vodopivec and Jaffe 2011). Mary Mostafanezhad (2013) states “Volunteer tourists tend to condemn global economic inequality and neoliberal political agendas, while at the same time participating in volunteer tourism, which is arguably a neoliberal project of privatised economic and social development” (p. 493). Vrasti (2012) cautions that the market solutions that permeate volunteer tourism consume the radical. The fantasy of ‘caring’ capitalism is that our market economy can fix environmental problems, poverty and inequality at the same time as giving us the time of our lives, helping the Southern *other*. Volunteer tourism attaches “itself to our dreams for a more just world and meaningful existence in essentially precarious and exploitative economic arrangements, and places what are potentially radical, affective and intellectual predispositions in the service of accumulation” (p. 29). Lille Chouliaraki (2013) states, “our moral encounter with human vulnerability is now cast in a particular logic of the market” (p. 5). Like Vrasti, she looks at the blurring of lines between economic exchanges, the market, and private emotion and humanitarian desire. Humanitarian aspirations become corporate aspirations, with the North remaining powerful in the exchange. Kate Simpson (2005) argues that “over the last five years the “gap year” has changed from a radical activity, dominated by charities and inspired by the travel of the hippie generation, to an institutionally accepted commercial gap year industry which helps form new citizens for a global age.” (p. 447). Paul Tarc (2013) positions neoliberal conditions as “thwarting the idealist dreams of international education” (p. 119). He warns that even if students come home fired up and ready to act, this acting is being co-opted by the neoliberal system. He calls for critical interrogation of what it means to ‘act’ (p. 120).

Because volunteer tourism, IESL and GCE impacts us where it matters, affectively, it is deeply effective. Jefferess (2012) explains that academic critique “cannot always intervene in the affective reception of the ‘message’” (p. 80). Mary Mostafanezhad (2013) explains that “affective response and corresponding aestheticization of poverty strategically displaces the history and politics of the encounter” (p. 162). Gada Mahrouse (2015) work on emotions, studies responses from Canadian students on a month-long college trip to Nicaragua. She found that Canadian participants engaged in ‘discourses of equation;’ we in the North have wealth, but they in the South have love and community. The feeling of love and community are imagined as dichotomous to wealth and an absence of poverty. The

learning becomes: we are both lucky, just in different ways. This reasoning erases global structural inequities.

Mahrouse was surprised at the number of stories that Northern student participants told her about intimacy and emotion between them and their Southern hosts. When she asked student participants about political and social aspects of privilege, she often received responses about emotions. Half the student participants who had spent two weeks with a host family used the word 'love' when describing their relationship. Mahrouse asks how the poverty that characterizes the living conditions of the hosts works to shape the affective reactions of the students. She concluded that "feelings and expressions of love helped the students to imagine themselves, and the world they inhabit, as less unequal and divided" (p. 223). Mary Conran (2011) takes up the problematic of voluntourists contributing to the inequality they are there to work against, by reinforcing the helper-helpee binary. She too posits that intimacy works to depoliticize the volunteer experience.

Manda Ann Roddick (2014) uses Simpson's work on volunteer abroad experiences as affirming what participants already 'know' about a Southern country, about poverty, and about inequity. Since participants are in the field for such a short time, they are unable to do the heavy intellectual work of understanding and listening. Paul Tarc (2001) argues that "rather than fostering collaboration, understanding and reciprocity, some practices of internationalization tend to instrumentalize learning and essentialize human difference" (p. 64). Wanda Vraști (2012) echoes this, explaining that "voluntourism is a politically suspect practice that does more to consolidate than to challenge Orientalist sensibilities and the consumerist spirit of capitalism" (p. 56). She found that programs did not engage in a robust pedagogical framework that would move encounters from purely observational ones to ones that were grounded in a structural analysis. Nancy Cook (2004) argues for the inclusion of self-reflexivity, shifting the focus on helping to one where we examine how our helping can offend and oppress.

The desired subject under Capital that is formed in this space wants to effect change in the Global South, intervene and help in countries experiencing poverty, but without the disruption of the reproduction of the system. Poverty, and the myriad of 'problems' in the South, are those of the South. The uncovering of the role of the North in the production of impairment is not, for example, something the desired subject under Capital would engage in - just learning that people with disabilities in the South experience hardship is enough

learning. The desire to work towards bettering their lives through our Northern presence is enough. The desired subject does not want to tear things apart or engage in a complicated intersectional systemic analysis, but instead release just enough steam to function in the current phase of capitalism. In the next chapter, I build on this analysis and take up the encounter with the disabled Southern *other* in this space. I work to understand how a binary reproduction of the Southern disabled *other* and the able-bodied Northern helper comes to be through these North South encounters structured by mainstream IESL and GCE.

Chapter Two: Theorizing encounters with disabled Southern *others*

Yet not a day goes by when we do not see the impaired “body” in the Global South being used as a symbol of humanitarian crisis, loss of rights and charitable appeal in a neoliberal humanitarian marketplace (Gill & Scholand-Vials 2014 in Berghs 2015: 744).

Introduction

In this chapter, I theorize the ways that disablement is reproduced through IESL and GCE, as it works to reproduce a caring and benevolent able-bodied Northern subject; a binary reproduction of the disabled Southern *other* and the Northern helper. This subject formation relies on two main processes: the reproduction of the able/disabled binary and the obscuring of our (Northern) role in the production of impairment. I engage with the question of how the Southern disabled body is utilized in the subject formation of the caring, benevolent able-bodied Northern global citizen through the disabled body as the *other*, in need of help and intervention. I begin to theorize the mainstream invitation to, and representation of, encounters with impairment and disability in IESL and GCE. More research is needed in this area, from a transdisciplinary space, exploring this form of subject-making. How are these bodies being imagined; which bodies are imagined as needing protection, care and interventions and which bodies are imagined as being entitled to do that labour?

The preceding chapter explored the literature theorizing these North-South encounters, and this chapter builds on this critical literature. Here I think through the ways in which the southern disabled *other's* body functions to reinforce the belonging of the able-bodied Northerner. I ask how IESL and GCE experiences and encounters function to reify the belonging to a more advanced, rehabilitative, and enlightened state, different than the ‘backwards’ way those with impairments are treated in the South, and how this erases the ways in which Northerners are complicit in the system of ableism, colonialism and the production of impairment and disablement. David Jefferess explains that in the field of IESL and GCE we must “examine how this discourse constitutes ‘us’ (and various others)” (Andreotti 2010: 8). How are IESL and GCE programs working to creating our able-bodied Northern selves through the production of the Southern disabled *other*? The binary of non-disabled Northerners going to help those with disabilities in the South is produced in the mainstream IESL and GCE field; the imagined able-bodied global citizens helping the imagined disabled *other*, where the processes of disablement are always obscured, never

made known, never made explicit. The neat line between the able and disabled is drawn - the disabled are an eclectic group of orphans in rickety-too-big wheelchairs, blind beggars and children in super-segregated schools and the benevolent helpers are an able-bodied group of enlightened experts. Like Rachel Gorman's call in the field of culture and art, where "festivals must avoid pandering to an imagined non-disability-identified audience who will benefit from learning about diversity and tolerance" (2007: 51) through the art of disabled artists, I argue that this challenge must be taken up in the field of IESL and GCE. The imagined able-bodied Northerner who benefits from caring for the disabled Southern *other* by becoming more tolerant and compassionate, needs to be deconstructed and complicated.

As taken up in the previous chapter, the larger field of IESL and GCE is steeped in binary narratives that reify and essentialize difference;

Within these imaginaries, difference is an absolute binary dichotomy (North/South; 'Us'/'Them'; 'dispensers'/supplicants of human rights; Spivak, 2004:530) that centres and normalises the sovereign Western subject of knowledge and agency: the privileged 'universal' learner and cosmopolitan expert who 'overcomes' the Other's difference and particularity, 'understands' and 'helps' her (Gunew, 2004:15) (in Andreotti 2010: 12).

Kate Zavitz and David Butz (2011) argue that the discourses at play in the field of international volunteering mirror the North South binaries, reproducing distractions between "mobility/immobility, wealthy/poor, gazer/gazed upon, and independent/dependent, all of which constitute a general differentiation between tourists as subjects and locals as objects" (p. 416). I argue that the able/disabled binary is also reproduced and made real, necessitating critical attention. Vanessa Andreotti and Lynn Mario de Souza (2012) explain that while the field of IESL and GCE proclaims to be inclusive and global, "the lack of analyses of power relations and knowledge construction in this area often results in educational practices that unintentionally reproduce ethnocentric, ahistorical, depoliticized, paternalistic, salvationist and triumphalist approaches that tend to deficit theorize, pathologizes or trivialize difference" (p. 1). In this chapter, I explore how this manifests in encounters with the disabled *other*, how the lack of analysis of power reproduces depoliticized and ahistorical approaches that individualize and pathologize disability in such a way that obscures any analysis of the production of impairment and disablement.

Disability Globally

Helen Meekosha (2008; 2011) tells us that sixty-six percent of people with disabilities live in the global South. This number is likely larger as it does not take into account under-reporting. She makes known the link between disability and poverty in the global South and highlights the tendency for the global North to attribute this to exotic natural events like tsunamis and earthquakes. She moves past this to ask the critical question about who profits from the poverty of those with disabilities in the South. She locates these profits in systems of colonialism, imperialism and globalization, and highlights “the role of the global North in “disabling” the global South” (2011: 668). Rachel Gorman (2010) uses the example of Haiti to work through the production of impairment through processes of interventions of the North in the South and the system of disablement produced through these same processes. She highlights a core critique of the rights model (Soldatic 2013), asking who is responsible for guaranteeing the rights of people when one state intervenes in another state, such as when Haiti signed over control of its main airport to the United States, just four days after the massive earthquake in January 2010. Does the extraterritorial control of the airport by the United States military then confer responsibility for the impairments and deaths caused by subsequent delays in medical aid arriving from international NGOs (Gorman 2010)? The narratives around disability that bombarded international news post-earthquake were stories of disabled people “as being at risk in the context of an ableist culture and an inaccessible built environment” (Gorman 2010: 4). These narratives contained no mention of the role of the North, in this case the United States, in the production of impairment, or imperialism as causing disablement (Ibid). Similar questions can be asked of transnational mining corporations in the South, which are engaged in food and fauna exportation, where workers use toxic pesticides, and environmental impacts devastate water, land and farming practices. These transnational actors are producing impairment in non-natural ways through violence to the environment, malnutrition, the fuelling of conflicts that leave people with impairments and the refusal to protect worker’s rights when they are working with harsh chemicals, in unsafe working conditions and built environments, and a myriad of violations of human rights (Connell 2011; Meekosha & Soldatic 2011).

Karen Soldatic (2013) takes up the *World Report on Disability* in her larger critique of the problematic relationship that the North has with those in the South. She argues that the Report leaves no room for alternative disability politics. I draw on Samantha Wehbi’s (2011) work here to forward an example of this Western-held idea of how disability politics

should be lived out in the South. Wehbi shows us, through her research with a disability rights NGO in Lebanon, the impacts of this larger framework of disability rights, informed by the World Health Organization. She describes the relationship between a disability NGO in Lebanon and Northern aid donors who fund projects. She finds that ideas of incompetence, corruption, and the inability to be experts characterize the attitude of Northern donors towards Southern NGOs. She highlights examples of when the Lebanese NGO was asked to have those receiving mobility devices pose for photos with the device to prove that they were indeed distributing the devices. The clients were outraged, reporting loss of dignity through experiences like these. Ironically, dignity is a cornerstone of the rights discourse. In reality, it is only dignity for some. Other grievances from those working in the NGO were the dispatching of ‘experts’ from the North to do work that those in Lebanon are trained and best placed to do as they know language, culture and intricacies. China Mills and Suman Fernando (2014) also take up fascinating work in this area, examining the effects of the globalizing of mental health practice, most firmly rooted in the provision of psychiatric services by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Movement for Global Mental Health (MGMH). Ibrahim Mohamed (2014) traces the effects of colonization on those with mental health labels in Kenya, linking current practices to ongoing colonial processes.

I take up these examples as a larger narrative of ways in which the North has problematically imagined and responded to disability in the South. The Western subject always holds power, expertise, ability to help, is able-bodied and has a legitimate right to intervene. The disabled *other* is always pliable, fixable, willing, open and grateful for this intervention in their lives. There is no space for alternative ways of being, alternative embodied experiences, alternative narratives or politics. Far from natural, it is war, armed intervention, our desire for cheap clothing and goods, capitalism and its effects on the climate that are producing impairment (Soldatic 2013). We in the North are intimately involved in the production of impairment and disablement in the South. So how do we expose the invisibility of this reality? How do we make this known in the field of IESL and GCE? How do we invite students to engage in a more complex and difficult learning? How do we invite them to live this difficult and horrific reality that they are not innocent, that things are not as they seemed when they clicked on the program that promised they would bring joy to people with disabilities in Argentina?

The individualization of disability is reproduced through the depoliticized and medicalized ways of constructing disability that invite students into encounters and the ways in which the lives of the people with disabilities, and the people themselves, are imagined. The subsequent responses to this individualization of disability through IESL and GCE are the helping, curing and rehabilitation narratives positioning the student from the Global North as the subject who can intervene in the lives of certain bodies, and to perform certain affective tasks. The 'care' experience, the intervention, begins, and ends, with the person with a disability; the solutions are individual, there is no analysis of how processes of colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, transnational corporations and state interventions produce impairment in the South in non-natural ways. Nor of how those with impairments are disabled by a system that is intimately propped up by us in the North. The able-bodied Northern student is constructed as the one that is uniquely placed to help the disabled *other*, innocent of the larger structures they benefit from. There is no larger structure around impairment that necessitates any self-reflexivity on the part of the Northern student. They remain innocent; simply there to help the poor disabled *other*. The body of the disabled *other* is there to care for, to fix and to give enrichment, hope and joy to the student from the North, reproducing their subjectivity as a caring global citizen. Students from the North come equipped with a framework for how to relate to the disabled *other*, with the desire to help, to fix, to rehabilitate, to measure, and to normalize. Any alternative is erased. Any alternative is seen as suspect, as asking too much, as a deviation from the norm. So the relationships built on this tacit agreement on what needs to happen become strained when the unruly body moves outside of this script. The programming and responses to disability are steeped in neoliberal language and focus on the language of rights, which may sit in opposition to the ways in which the host culture responds to disability, or impairment. Experiences of impairment might not be disabling in certain cultures or subcultures but these localities are erased within Western-designed programs (Berghs 2015).

Individualization of Disability in IESL and GCE Preparation

Preparation for IESL and GCE experiences often relies on experiential exercises designed to engage students in ways that ask them to move around and affectively feel what it 'will be like' to live in a Southern country and culture. These exercises can employ an individualization of disability as a pedagogical tool. Here I present a very common group exercise that students engage in when preparing to go abroad; it is an exercise designed to

make known the difficulties about what it affectively feels like for a Northern person to live in the Global South:

Note on the physical space: A classroom at any university campus in the Global North. Chairs and garbage bins, coats, bags and other objects are strewn haphazardly across the room in an improvised obstacle course of sorts.

“Welcome to (any volunteer, IESL or GCE program) preparation! We are going to do a group exercise to teach you about how *hard* it is to live abroad, all of the difficult things you will need to negotiate, you will be out of your comfort zone, you will be far from home and things will be *difficult*!”

Get into a pair with another participant.

Each pair of humans needs to make up a sound that will serve as a signal to each other. Eg: clapping hands, whistling. Each pair must have a unique sound.

Each person now puts on a blindfold. No peeking!

Now the group leader must separate each pair and place them in strategic places around the room, leading them through the objects strewn about. Making sure they are as far apart as possible.

Then the group leader instructs the pairs to use their sound, and only their specific sound, to find each other.

Participants then attempt to move through the room, blindfolded, making their designated sound and find their pair.

This is one of many exercises designed to teach young people embarking on experiences abroad about the difficulties of leaving home and going over *there*. It operates on the following logic: Acquire a sensory impairment. Then navigate a disabling built environment with your newly acquired impairment.

The impairment is the location of difficulty. The individualization of disability is the way students are asked to engage with understanding how hard it will be to live difference; the script on disability begins here. Until I engaged in studies of disability from a critical place, I engaged in these very activities in cross-cultural animation. I always felt uncomfortable about the exercises, but until I was introduced to Critical Disability Theory, I did not have the language to express why. These exercises are ubiquitous in this field. And

often elicit powerful responses from students. They are designed to do so as they are deeply imbibed with individual and medical understandings of disability and are the beginning of the invitation to engage with disability. Who is imagined as the participant here? Who is not a participant? What binaries are being reproduced?

Gada Mahrouse (2011) considers how responsible volunteer tourism perpetuates gendered and racialized dynamics. The above example uncovers another intersectional site of difference, the perpetuation of an individualized construction of disability. As we see from the group exercise example above, the individualization of disability begins before students go abroad. It is infused in group exercises, in images used to sell these experiences, in the language used to describe the experience, and in student reflections shared through program websites and testimonials used to entice new participants. The ways in which Northern student participants imagine the South is limited by Eurocentric imaginaries and the current global world order; this imagining restricts their ability to engage in radically different ways of thinking about those in the South (Bishop 2013). In other words, because of these dominant narratives, our thinking is limited. It structures the encounters before we even engage in meeting the *other*.

Invitation to Help the Disabled Southern *Other*

I now turn to the ways in which encounters with the Southern disabled *other* are constructed by two large international volunteering organizations and reproduced through student reflections post-experience. I take up the language used to introduce and sell the programs, the requirements needed for one to engage in the volunteer labour, and the student reflections promoted as reflective of the desired experience highlighted on their websites. The first organization is Projects Abroad (PA), which is based in New York City and Toronto, has over 600 staff members, has sent nearly 100,000 volunteers abroad and claims to be “the world’s leading international volunteer organization” (Projects Abroad 2016B). The second is Cross-Cultural Solutions, with its name exposing its grandiose machinations. They too have been operating for 20 years, have sent over 35,000 volunteers abroad, claim to “believe that the local people are the experts,” and state that their work contributes to five of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Cross Cultural Solutions 2016A). Both organizations present as global volunteer organizations, and importantly for this study, encourage post-secondary students to participate as part of a university course on service learning or independent study at their home institution. They

are framed as informal as well as formal, educational experiences. Indeed, gaining academic credit is a part of their marketing strategy, going as far as to state “[we] will do everything we can to help you get credit. We can sign forms, write letters verifying your participation in our projects, or talk to your school administrators ourselves. Please contact us if you have any questions about how [we] can help you get credit” (Projects Abroad 2016A).

I engaged in the analysis of the websites of these two organizations in order to better understand the invitation to the young person from the North. What kinds of encounters were Projects Abroad and Cross-Cultural Solutions inviting young people to engage in? On the Projects Abroad website, the volunteer projects are organized by age category, then by choosing whether you want to volunteer (shorter term) or intern (longer term) and then by ‘area’ of volunteer work. Projects working with people with disabilities are collected under the categories: projects for all ages, volunteer (as opposed to a longer internship) and the imagined activity is categorized as ‘care.’ The role of the volunteer is described as “assisting with caring for children and others in need of support at orphanages, day cares, kindergartens, special-needs centres, elderly homes, and other care facilities. Requirements: None” (Projects Abroad 2016C). The potential volunteer then chooses, in this generic ‘care’ category, from the different projects organized by country. Therefore, the potential volunteer is assumed to be making their choice by first wanting to do ‘care’ work and then choosing where geographically that care work will take place.

I choose one country example, Argentina, to illustrate what a care placement with disabled Southern *others* entails; “Volunteers are needed in children’s homes and special-needs centres. You may be asked to help with a wide range of activities, from assisting the staff with basic care duties to playing with the children” (Projects Abroad 2016C). The length of placement can be as short as one week, and they state “all we ask is that you have energy, enthusiasm, and a commitment to seeing the work through” (Ibid). Entering into institutional care homes for children requires no special training, police checks, previous experience, or even age requirements. When describing the kind of work the volunteer will engage in, Projects Abroad is very careful to consistently mention that it is catered to the desires and wishes of the volunteer, “[y]ou will also have some time to spend one on one with individuals at your placement, helping them with basic education or activities of your choice” and “[t]here are some opportunities to get involved in physiotherapy sessions and help with necessary daily exercises. It can make a huge difference for these individuals to

have your attention, support, and friendship, and you will quickly find that you are an integral part of the staff team.” (Ibid). The programming is structured to ensure maximum pleasure and self-development for the volunteer coming from the North. The calls to action of participating in ‘physiotherapy sessions’ and the use of ‘integral part of the staff team’ signal the designation of Northern expert in this context. However, an expert with no training, knowledge, professional designation or requirements. Being Northern is seemingly enough to be an ‘integral part of the staff.’

The reflection from a young person who engaged in this experience is telling of the larger narratives of catering to the Northern helper, and the use of disabled bodies to construct that caring and benevolent self (Jefferess 2012):

I learned quickly what “making a difference” really is. In Bethel Children’s Home (or in any care placement), that is seeing love sliding off of you and onto the children, pouring onto them what they need most and lack of volunteers from Argentina and international alike do not offer that to them. The kids’ vibrancy of love back onto you reflects that love, and that is how you can tell how much you are giving them. Making a difference in the short term falls into that, and making a difference in the long term. . . that comes with making promises to the children that you won’t forget them, that they aren’t just a phase of your life where you were giving and then didn’t look back. . . that you will either return to see them, or follow up on seeing how they are doing, or try to give more to the organization in some means. This is how I feel, at least. . . I spent about 4-6 hours a day at the placement, walking about the quarters and playing with whichever age group I desired, merely playing or helping with the lessons in the “jardin” (pre-school) for the youngest children in the home. . . Everyday on my walk home, I thought of how little I had actually done but of what a huge emotive exchange had passed between the children and me. It was really incredible. . . As far as bridging cultural gaps: I didn’t bridge them. . . I lived as an Argentinean with no frets attached and loved it dearly (Projects Abroad, 2016D).

In this reflection we hear from a Northerner imagining that she is uniquely placed to give love to the children with disabilities that no other volunteer can. She asserts that Argentinians do not, or are not able, do this work. She imagines her experience as making a difference, however, we know that such short-term volunteer work with marginalized children, where these manufactured attachments are encouraged, actually worsens the effects of institutional care (Richter & Norman 2010). She highlights her ability to move in and out of each institutional care space, highlighting that it was her desire to be where she *wanted* to be. This is troubling, as the bodies she was caring for are rendered fixed to the institutional space, making this choice of movement ever more stark in comparison. She expresses amazement at a very troubling common narrative from volunteers in these spaces;

that there was little “done” in terms of ‘work’ but the experience is one of so many emotions (Vrasti 2012). Would this be acceptable in a preschool or school in the North? Would we accept that while no learning was accomplished, we had so many emotions? She ends with her reflection on becoming an Argentinean - here we see the total erasure of class, race, global structures of power, colonialism, (Mahrouse 2010, 2011, 2014, 2015) all of this just disappeared as she magically became Argentinian, when she wanted, for as long as she wanted, all as her choice. To put this into the Projects Abroad invitation used to call participants, this Northerner was set up to have this affective experience, the encounter was scripted in this highly specific way, already imbuing her with a sense of benevolence, entitlement and positioned her as the able-bodied subject to care for the disabled bodies.

I turn to the organization Cross-Cultural Solutions (CCS). On their website the volunteer projects are organized by ‘areas of impact’ with disability being collected under the area titled, “The CCS support for people with disabilities project” This area is described as:

In many communities around the world, individuals with disabilities face harsh social stigmas and are left with few resources. As an international volunteer, work alongside our partner organizations to bring joy to the lives of people with disabilities as they strive to live each day to its fullest. In communities where resources are already scarce, it’s not uncommon for individuals with disabilities to go without vital care and services. Whether you’re leading a music lesson, sharing a meal, assisting with exercises and physical therapy, or simply holding a hand, your service will enrich the lives of people with disabilities and free staff resources so that individuals get more of the attention and love that they need. Your efforts will strengthen the visibility of these services, and contribute to larger community efforts to break down the stereotypes and stigmas faced by individuals with disabilities (Cross Cultural Solutions 2016B).

Here there is a cursory nod to the process of stigma, but of course no explanation of how these processes work or who they benefit (Meekosha 2011), instead the potential volunteer is quickly reminded that it will be them who will erase these complex processes and give people with disabilities joy. Joy will erase stigma. Then there is depoliticized mention of scarce resources, with no mention of the processes behind this statement, quickly followed up with telling the potential volunteer that ‘simply holding a hand’ will replace the disabling structures that mean no access to water, food security, or medical attention, to name a few. Inexplicably, the holding of hands will create a situation where services will become more visible and also break down stigma; ostensibly through the expression of care from the Northern body in the encounter with the Southern disabled *other*. Somehow, regardless that this makes no sense, the 35,000 volunteers that have volunteered through CCS seem to be

moved by these narratives, which work to keep invisible the global colonial and imperial structures of power that produce impairments and subsequent disablement (Soldatic 2013).

While CCS claims to work with local partners, envisioning them as experts, the above demonstrates that the disabled body is outside of that designation of expert, and instead is an object in need of joy and love. The call of spending one week in the South and holding the hand of the disabled *other*, in order to bring joy and erase stigma, is a seductive call to young people who are frustrated and angry with an unjust world. CCS' (2016) claim that in "[i]n many communities around the world, individuals with disabilities face harsh social stigmas and are left with few resources" is coded racist language for designating the Global South as ableist. They go on to position the Northern volunteer as improving the human rights of people with disabilities in the South just by being there by stating, "[y]our efforts will strengthen..." (CCS 2016). This positioning, relying on salvationalist, racist and ableist trope, erases the ways in which the North is implicit in the production of impairment, and works to erase the ways communities in the Global South are doing disability politics differently, outside the neoliberal project of rights (Berghs 2015, Soldatic 2013).²

I turn now to a reflection from a young person who volunteered with CCS in Guatemala with her mother and sister,

Recently, my mom, sister, and I traveled to Guatemala to volunteer together with Cross-Cultural Solutions for one week. And although we're an incredibly close bunch, I feel like I got to see certain sides of those two (and myself), for the very first time. . . My younger sister Jill is an introvert (I knew that). But despite that fact, she is notably outgoing and comfortable around adults with disabilities. I think Jill learned that about herself, too. She is at ease feeding those who can't physically do so themselves. She responds with an effortless grace to any sort of scream or spill. It's incredible to see. It even inspired me (the token family extrovert) to warm up when I was feeling nervous. . . Volunteering together creates memories that will add depth to any relationship. For that period of time, you show up completely for the people you're with (Cross Cultural Solutions 2016C).

The narratives here reinforce the right of the Northern helper to intervene on the lives of the disabled Southern *other*. CCS chose to highlight this specific reflection in the section on care, signaling the organizational support for these kinds of encounters, reproducing disabling narratives. As Barbara Heron (2007) explains, "Thus, African [here Guatemalan]

² Thanks to Rachel Gorman for helping me think this through, she noted that this is "continuous with the ideology of the "white man's burden."

people are always construed as available to us, and our assumptions are pervaded by a planetary consciousness such that, just as we assume the right to be in the Other's space, so are we (self-) positioned as entitled to intervene in the Other's existence, and to seek relations with whom we choose" (p. 66). The positioning of the volunteer from the North as benevolent, caring, loving, responding to the disruptions of the disabled body, reproduces narratives around unruly bodies (Ervelles 2000), individualization of disability and depoliticizes processes of care, and how "subaltern bodies are made to feel at odds with themselves" (Ahmed 2006: 133 in Vrasti 2012: 53). The use of the disruptive body in this narrative is solely to teach the Northerner about how wonderful her sister is, how caring and benevolent she is in response to disruptive Southern bodies (Jefferess 2011a). The disabled unruly body is used to constitute the able-bodiedness of the Northern volunteer, she embodies 'effortless grace' in response to the unruly body, learning more about her able-bodiedness through 'knowing' and caring for the disabled body of the *other*.

Both PA and CCS set up a very clear invitation for Northern volunteers; the invitation to the encounter is structured as one which the international (read: Northern) able-bodied volunteer will bring joy, care, love, and enrich the lives of the disabled Southern *other*, through activities like holding their hands and sharing a meal. Projects Abroad (2016) even goes as far as to say that this will break down stigma in the community. The depoliticized individualization of disability creates a dangerous narrative of how bodies are imagined, what they need, and how they need to be disciplined. The disabled *other* is imagined as passive, needing of care and only able to lead a fulfilling or happy life through the agency and benevolence given by the Northern global citizen. The Southern disabled *other* is imagined as a passive recipient of care, waiting for someone to touch their hand, to awake their joy and that they will welcome this encounter that will remove all barriers to a more whole and worthwhile life. The human-ness of the Northern volunteer is reproduced through the encounter with the disabled *other*. This imagined disabled *other* does not have agency, is not a local expert, and is not imagined to want anything more than love and attention. There is no room for alternative ways of imagining, constructing or resisting disablement, and certainly no room for imagining disability as about unnatural systems or politics, rooted in Capital.

The practice of international volunteering in spaces like hospitals, rehabilitative centres, health facilities, and orphanages - places disabled bodies live - is an area needing critical

disability research. Noelle Sullivan (2016) researches clinical training through volunteering in Tanzania by medical students from the United States. She uses an example of a recent case in the United States of an eighteen year old arrested for posing as a medical doctor, practicing medicine without a license to provocatively highlight how practicing medicine without a licence in the United States is illegal, but if an American does the same in the Global South they would be acclaimed for their goodness (n.p.). She explains,

Students teaching students how to do procedures was routine in several of the six hospitals I have researched in Tanzania. A former student of mine volunteered in India as a high schooler, where he administered surgical anesthetics. During college, he went to Peru, where he administered shots, performed pre-natal check ups, tested patients for HIV and syphilis, and took blood samples (2016: n.p.).

Interventions and procedures on certain bodies are sanctioned by the fact that those bodies live in the South, are poor, racialized and marginalized. She argues that the desire to help does not justify the practicing of medicine on bodies at home, and therefore should not justify the practicing of medicine on bodies in the South. A related area for further thought, and beyond the scope of this study, is the paradoxical nature of the encounter with the disabled *other* in the South as desirable and laudable while encounters with disabled people here in Canada are avoided or shunned. One does not see young people clambering to pay to volunteer at organizations that serve people with disabilities in the North. We do not see young people proudly changing their Facebook profile picture to one of them cuddling a young child with a disability, and there are no stadiums full of young people shouting Me to We in reference to working with those marginalized by a disabling system in Canada. The bodies need geography of place; disability is sexier in some spaces.

Dangerous Discourses in IESL and GCE Literature

Borrowing from Margrit Shildrick's (2009) *Dangerous Discourses of Disability*, I argue that much of the way disability is imagined, talked about and constructed in IESL and GCE is a dangerous and disabling discourse. I began by highlighting a common experiential exercise used in preparing participants for living difference in the South, explored the practice of IESL and GCE through two large mainstream organizations online recruitment materials, and now I turn to the emerging Canadian literature in the field of IESL and GCE. The first Canadian edited volume on IESL and GCE, *The World is my Classroom: International Learning and Canadian Higher Education* (Eds. Rennick & Desjardins 2013) used student reflections as an integral part of the volume. The editors choose to highlight a

number of Canadian university student reflections, titled *intermezzos*, about their IESL experiences in the South. They aim to highlight the student learning that resulted from these types of experiences, the transformational learning that the field purports to engender. Firstly, some important context about the book. The cover photo is of a young white man, sitting in what looks to be a desert, staring off into the distance, this coupled with the title, *The World is my Classroom*, does not inspire one to think that the book will engage in a critical or decolonizing analysis. It has not been well received by scholars in the field of critical IESL and GCE (Andreotti 2016b) who argue for a radical unsettling and decolonization of the field.

The student reflection I want to highlight sits under the chapter title, *What Draws Students to Go Abroad*, and is titled Planting Little Seeds, from a student in a placement in Los Peptos, Nicaragua. She writes:

When Father's Day came around, I saw first-hand how difficult the home lives for many of these children. There were approximately fifty children, youths and adults at *Los Pepitos*, and only four fathers came to the celebration, leaving many children disappointed during a party that was supposed to lift their spirits. That day I learned a little bit more about the culture around me and the stigmas I was trying to fight. This is an example of "ignorance is bliss" because I soon learned that many of the kids had been abandoned by their parents in one way or another, leaving them to live with older siblings, distant relatives, or simply on their own. Many of the parents had died, moved away or plainly turned their children away because of their disability. Many fathers wanted nothing to do with children who reminded them of weakness and failure. The complications of this point of view were too staggering for me to absorb. All I wanted to do at that moment was somehow take away their pain (and mine) and have them play and live like kids are supposed to, untouched by the pains of reality for a little bit longer" She goes on, "Once again I wanted to bring out the fairy dust, sprinkle it all over the place, and free them from their misfortune, be it disability, violence, poverty, or illiteracy" (18). And, "Three months took me on a roller coaster of emotions, testing everything I knew, and challenged me in ways I would have never expected. With all that said and done, I am a little closer to discovering the true me, and I would return to those same chicken buses, heat waves, and unreliable water sources in a heart beat (DeBrower 2013: 17- 19).

I highlight this reflection, one that was published in an edited anthology on the *possibilities* of Canadian IESL learning, to demonstrate the depth of the dangerous discourses that emerge from non-critical ISL programming and the subsequent reproduction in IESL literature and analysis. The equation of disability to misfortune, the positioning of herself as the saviour who could magically disappear poverty and disablement as if she was innocent in these constructions, her self-appointment as expert on what the causes of

disablement are in Nicaragua after spending just three months there, all help us to understand the normative narratives at play in IESL and GCE. Throughout her reflection she understands disability not as a complex process of disablement, involving transnational actors, but as cultural barriers. These barriers act in ways to distinguish ‘us’ from ‘them’ (Heron 2007: 72). Disability, violence and poverty are somehow unique to Nicaraguan culture and not historically produced through colonial and imperial disabling practices. Her able-bodiedness is constituted through the *others*’ disability, her humanity is constituted through her empathy and pain at uncovering the ‘reality’ of poverty. This reasoning allows the Northern student to remain innocent in the process, and bestowed with the enlightened and unique desire to free the backwards *other* from these ‘misfortunes.’ Her concluding thoughts that the poverty of others was something that brought her closer to discovering her true self, and therefore was worth the hardship *she* had to live for three months, speak to the focus on the Northern self in IESL and GCE (Chouliaraki, 2013). Her perverse happiness is based on others living in poverty so those from the North can discover their true selves. It is clear that programming is focused on the student from the North - it is about their learning. But the learning is about other people’s poverty. What does it mean when students see these experiences as another site of consumption of knowledge for their own development? The stories of injustice and poverty of those in the South become stories we are privileged to tell. And when we tell them, we are rewarded for it. We are told we are amazing, strong, we are beautiful, and we are courageous. The humans about whom we tell these stories are reduced to objects; they are stripped of their humanity; they are only known as the objects that allowed for this learning to happen for us. ‘Their’ poverty, and it is always theirs, makes us better.

The editors of this scholarly volume have chosen this piece of student reflection to highlight as an example of transformative learning. I understand this reflection not as an individual case of a student engaging in learning that is damaging to the *other*, but as an example of the overall dangerous and disabling discourses that come out of learning structured by an uncritical framework. This student was formed through her undergraduate education that did not equip her with a critical analysis to make sense of what she was living in another way, her experience reproduced the values, discourses, and ethos of IESL and GCE, steeped in binaries, neoliberal Western subject-making and understandings of the world. She was set up to produce this narrative. What else would a young person produce as

knowledge when they are invited into a learning experience that is predicated on disabling binaries and discourses, and without critical tools to deconstruct them.

Reproduction of Disabling Subjectivities

The process of subject formation explored in this chapter works to do specific things; it erases the disabled student from the North, as the Northern helper is constructed as the able-bodied carer. What happens when the Northern subject is disabled and engages in the space of IESL and GCE? Is their body seen as unruly, disruptive, not wanted? This is an area for further study, a hopeful crack in the binary. It erases the *other* with an impairment in the South who does not identify as disabled. The able/disabled binary does not leave room for these alternative subjects or ways of being. It erases any space for an alternative disability politics to be imagined or worked towards. Projects within mainstream IESL and GCE are situated in an individual model of disability, one that provides no structural analysis nor moves to acknowledge the structures that create disablement or impairment. The invitation to this specific encounter doesn't allow for mutuality or agency, and places the onus on the *other* to help the student unlearn the framework; labour that is unfair and onerous (Heron 2011). The disabled body is imagined as serving the educational- and self-development of the able-bodied Northerner. The disabled *other* is a passive recipient of care. The disabled body is the perfect site in the helping and caring narrative, an unruly body in a chaotic and exotic space, needing the loving and joyful, read civilized and enlightened, affective touch and discipline of the capable Northern global citizen. So the benevolent, caring and selfless acts enable the reproduction of this particular kind of subject in neoliberal times, subjects needed to undertake labour that requires flexibility and cosmopolitanism as per the needs of Capital (Vrasti 2012).

The able/disabled binary invites young people into an innocent script where they are invited to engage with an individual construction of disability. Vague references to stigma and lack of resources are quickly pushed aside by the more forceful narrative around helping the Southern disabled *other* through holding their hand and giving them joy. We see the reproduction of this narrative through student reflections, with one young person understanding herself as the only actor uniquely equipped or with the enlightened sense of what is needed, "that is seeing love sliding off of you and onto the children, pouring onto them what they need most and lack of volunteers from Argentina and international alike do not offer that to them" (Projects Abroad 2016B). The able/disabled binaries, the erasure of

the production of impairment and the individualization of disability work together to produce a certain Northern subject, one that is caring, benevolent, bringing joy and love to those who have no joy or love, and one that can move in and out of geographical spaces, spaces that are depoliticized, de-historicized and function as a space of learning and enrichment for them, subjecting certain bodies to policing, interventions and care dictated by the desires of the Northern able-bodied subject.

So the question becomes, how do we make known the blurriness of the able-bodied/disabled binaries reproduced in this space? Goodley (2013) reminds us, “[t]he disabled body, then, is not only a site of oppression but (like all forms of oppression) always contradictory and therefore full of the promise of potentiality” (p. 638). How can educators make known the processes of disablement and production of impairment in the South that are fuelled by our consumption and way of life in the North? Could this be fertile and revolutionary ground for the unsettling of the field of IESL and GCE? How can Critical Disability Studies scholars engage in this work in order to push the field of IESL and GCE into a more just future that is inclusive of different ontologies and ways of being in the world? Gada Mahrouse (2010) makes known the importance of a larger, structural analysis in IESL and GCE, stating that “[p]erhaps most importantly students need to notice how our involvement with social justice activism obscures our complicity in current power imbalances and allows us to conceive of ourselves as innocent” (p. 183). How can we make known that the bananas grown in Dominican Republic, the coffee from Ethiopia, the clothes made in Bangladesh, are all completed under certain conditions, that produce impairment and disablement, in order to satisfy the insatiable desires of the North, structured by Capital? How can we make known our complicity in this production of impairment and disability? How can we make known to students who will complete their IESL and GCE experiences in these very places that they are not separate from these processes, engage them in critical work that moves towards self-reflexivity and a willingness to stay in that difficult learning? Intervention into this field is fraught with problems, difficulties, and resistance.

Chapter Three: Research methodology and process

But it is precisely because voluntourism enjoys such unabashed support that we should interrogate its claims, strategies and ambitions (Vrasti 2012: p. 4).

Research Design: Qualitative Case Study

Researching North/South Encounters with *Others*

This work is deeply influenced by Wanda Vrasti's (2012) call to understand this space of Northerners volunteering in the Global South as a way to understand relations of North/South power and subject-making. In the critical literature these experiences work as "an innovative strategy of government reflective of contemporary transformations in capitalist production, consumption and citizenship practices" and a "neoliberal strateg[y] of subject formation" (Vrasti 2012: 12). I work to make sense of encounters in this space, what they can tell us about disablement and subjectivities and what they cannot tell us, and using the case study of Intercordia Canada - a relational model that tries to resist disablement and the reproduction of neoliberal subjectivities - look for places where student narratives disrupt ahistorical learning that celebrates the Northern self. Interruptions to the desire to do good, the desire to encounter the other and examine where the model reproduces disablement. Vrasti (2012) explains that for "postcolonial theory, in particular, travel writing has become an easy target to demonstrate the violent and exclusionary effects of colonial forms of knowledge and power" (p. 10). She goes on to say that writing has been focused on representation, is not critical in nature, and is too "one-dimensional" (p. 10). She puts forward that the explicit and empirical politicization of transnational travel and encounters helps us understand them as important sites for producing political meaning and subjectivities. This is what guided this study: diving into encounters with the *other*, structured by the pedagogy of Intercordia, as sites for possible disruptions to neoliberal subject-making. Is a relational IESL program like Intercordia opening a space for the making of new subjects, subjects that would engage in self-reflexivity and critique the ways in which they were reproducing colonial imaginings of the world? How far and deep does this learning go as it is firmly rooted in neoliberal structures? What remains unchallenged and rooted in neoliberal relationships of power and privilege?

Gada Mahrouse (2015) explains that she accidentally uncovered emotions in a study of Canadian University students on an IESL study abroad trip to Nicaragua. She was

interested in studying social power and privilege at play in such encounters and found her data full of emotions.

“Indeed, I have shown that such expressions can reveal many insights about power and North/South relations. More specifically, the analytic I used helped to show how inequalities can be negotiated through emotional experiences and displays. This methodological finding has important implications for researchers who, like me, are committed to uncovering some of the insidious ways in which power manifests in encounters involving people from the Global North who have traveled to the Global South (p. 224).

Since I have worked intimately with Intercordia for a decade, I knew my data would be full of emotions. I asked about emotions and relationships and moments of time. The heart of Intercordia is relationship, relationships of difference. At the heart of sociality are emotions (Flam 2015) and I wanted to attend to this. Because encounters are so deeply felt, they are powerful (Jefferess 2013). I was interested in taking the time and space to attend to affect with participants, asking them for stories about specific affective moments.

I worked with the knowledge that it is difficult to ‘capture’ subjectivity, as it is in constant flux. Vrasti (2012) tells us that subjectivity is fluid, unstable and in movement, that “subjectivity is never complete; it is in a constant field of struggle between power and resistance: both are present at all times” (p. 16). The qualitative interview I did with one person on one day could be different if I had done it three months later or one year earlier. I asked some questions about temporality of their ideas or desires in this space, to understand what drew them to the program before they enrolled, what was meaningful as they prepared for the program, and how they felt during the program. However, the shifting nature of subjectivity means that the data I gathered is always in flux. Learning shifts and changes as we engage with different pieces of our experiences and ourselves and as we grow and gain new knowledge.

I want to end this section with Vrasti’s (2012) cautioning that “the road to hell is paved with uncritical intentions” (p. 20). I am critical because I want to work within and towards a disparate and diverse emancipatory project of struggle for a freedom that considers all sites of difference and identity. Only when we critique the movements and labour we love and are engaged in, can we move forwards collectively. Following Creswell and Miller’s (2000) call to explain our lens and our paradigm assumptions (p. 129), I wrote this as an accessible study, to engage educators in this field and as critical research to be

used to prompt questions and self-reflexivity for those of us engaged in education in this field, both popular and formal. I am making an explicit call for disability to be taken up in a structural way in the IESL and GCE literature and practice.

Self in this Research

Throughout my research I use the term *we*, implicating myself, in the hierarchies of power and privilege, inequality and ableism, colonialism and imperialism that this study is embedded in. Creswell and Miller (2000) explain the critical perspective as one in which the researcher's historical situatedness influences their study. Researchers must remain "reflexive and disclose what they bring to a narrative" (p. 126). I struggle with my position as a white cis-gender, currently able-bodied researcher. I have internalized many oppressions and logics of Capital and white supremacy and risk not engaging in research that actively names and identifies racialized, classed or disabled aspects of encounters.

As I write this section, the news that Berta Cáceres, an indigenous woman engaged in various interconnected struggles for justice in her homeland of Honduras, was brutally murdered for her leadership in the struggle against transnational Capital. Reflecting, I wrote this:

thinking about this global struggle that certain bodies feel more deeply. thinking about the meaningless messages of solidarity, myself included, from positions of privilege and bodies who don't have to live on the front lines of environmental crimes, human rights violations and structural injustice and poverty. feeling hopeless and feeling full of hope that amazing humans like Berta are in the struggle in intimate ways. but mostly feeling hopeless as she was brutally murdered and the culture of impunity and racism that her death is embedded in will live on. we need more Bertas. We don't need more Hillarys. Sad and outraged. Viva Berta (Facebook, 2016).

I reference this post as I want to firmly root myself in the very system that I am trying to resist or subvert. I live in it; I contribute to it; and I resist it. Leila Angod offers similar concerns in her work on race and elite schools, asking, "[i]n a study that critiques the fashioning of the humanitarian hero, how do I avoid positioning myself as the hero researcher who uncovers this process?" (2015: 52). This is a call that I too called myself to revisit as I worked through this study. I was also influenced here by Barbara Heron's (2007) work, and her inclusion of herself when she talks about the white women development workers she interviewed. I am not writing from the subaltern position. I am writing from a white, cis-female, currently able-bodied, bourgeois position and I need to write from this

position of power with all its implications. Heron's work helped me think through my own role in the domination and violence of others, and the constant need to be attending to this, and in the invitation I extend to students engaged in these experiences to be in this space as well. Here I am also reminded of Vanier and his invitation to live in community in L'Arche, where he views being in the day to day with those marginalized in our society as important, and sitting down together at the table and eating a meal in community as an important ritual together. It reminds me that this is a small, but powerful, way of being in resistance to systems of domination and ableism that say the bodies that inhabit the spaces of L'Arche around the world are not of value, are not important.

Deborah Gould (2015) writes about what to do when your data make you cry. She discussed the tensions in doing research on a direct action AIDS activist group, whose struggle she had been intimately involved in for 6 years. She studied the group at a later date and captures difficulty in researching a group you are so deeply emotionally and ethically involved with, whose ideology is your own.

Common sense has a background quality to it that makes it hard to notice; we take it for granted to such an extent that it fails to rise to the level of conscious recognition, and is even less likely to impress itself upon one as being worthy of investigation in its own right. Through my involvement in the movement, ACT UP's understandings of itself and of the AIDS crisis—I'm thinking here of the beliefs and values held by nearly everyone in the movement, internal conflicts notwithstanding—had come to seem natural, axiomatic, and unremarkable to me (Gould 2015: 165).

The challenge of inquiring into the very work that you are intimately involved in, your 'common sense' is a struggle and reality deeply linked to my work in this study.

Case Study

I completed semi-structured qualitative interviews with former Intercordia Canada student participants, a small alternative IESL program. Intercordia focuses on relationships across difference, and marries academic and experiential learning. I wanted to complete a small number of in-depth interviews with alumni of the Intercordia program to gain insight into learning that is specifically facilitated under this critical pedagogy, identifying moments of disruption to mainstream IESL and GCE learning. I designed this study to make two main contributions to the field; to theorize encounters in IESL and GCE that work to reproduce

knowledge about disability as individual and calling for specific neoliberal subjects as caring and benevolent helpers of the disabled Southern *other*. And secondly, to explore disruptions to these reproductions and disruptions, facilitated through a pedagogy that takes up disability in a structural, contextual, and relational way, locating disability not in individuals but rather in structures and societies.

Interviews

Access

Intercordia Canada granted access to their overseas partners and student alumni for this research in 2013. In 2014, Intercordia went through a change in leadership from the founding director to a new director. This transition failed and the new director resigned quite quickly. This was a difficult and rocky time for the organization and the Board of Directors, unable to engage in another costly and time-consuming leadership search, decided to suspend operations for the year. In the Fall of 2015, the Board of Directors accepted a proposal from myself and Katie MacDonald, both of us former staff of Intercordia and deeply invested in the mission and work, to lead a year of transition and re-visioning, with scaled back programming. We are both PhD candidates engaged in research in the field of international service learning and international experiential learning.³ Mid-way through my research, I found myself in the position of leading the organization. I had a number of conversations with Katie about this and we agreed that as co-Directors there was a form of safe-check and that she would be able to make more objective decisions if the need arose. For example, if a research participant were worried about their participation in the study, they would be able to connect with Katie instead of through me.

Ethics

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics Guidelines (Certificate #: STU 2013 - 088). I did not offer any remuneration to participants. I did not foresee any risk to participants, as participants remained anonymous and are used to reflecting on their Intercordia experience in academic and non-academic settings. Their participation in this study was completely

³ Katie has recently completed her PhD in Sociology at the University of Alberta and is now Dr. Katie MacDonald. Congratulations!

voluntary and I made clear to them in their consent form that they could choose to stop participating at any time. I outlined that a decision not to volunteer would not influence the nature of their relationship with me, the researcher, or with Intercordia Canada. I included in the consent form, and reiterated verbally at the beginning of the interview, that each participant had the right to opt out of answering any particular question either during the interview, or could ask me to take out any part post-interview.

Sample Selection

For the semi-structured qualitative interviews, I engaged in purposeful sampling, as I was interested in “information rich cases for in-depth study” (Patton 1990: p. 182). I wanted to understand “an open range of experiences” in this space (Ibid: p. 184), by doing in-depth qualitative interviews with a small number of participants, or “intensity sampling” (p. 171). The initial pool for potential research participants was the Intercordia database of alumni, approximately 250 participants. From there I identified the names of alumni who were placed in a placement where I knew they had had significant interaction with people with disabilities. I then looked at the most recent alumni and those I knew personally and who I thought might be open to an interview. I had a list of twelve names to start; I made contact with these potential participants and asked them if they would be open to an interview and whether they knew anyone else who might be interested (Appendix C). Each participant I asked to participate said an enthusiastic yes. This part of the process was quite easy. I made initial contact and asked them if they were open to an interview. They responded with a yes and we chose a time to meet in person or on Skype. Some of the interviews I completed in person in Toronto. The majority were over Skype, using a video call so I could still see their embodied self. I recorded the interviews and took notes by hand. I sent the interview questions to the participants in advance. This was received well by participants and many made comments that they wanted to go over their journals from the time of their Intercordia experience to identify specific moments or stories.

The strength of this sampling procedure was that I engaged research participants that I had a previous relationship with, some more personal than others, and therefore there was a level of trust already established that enhanced the quality of the data. The weakness was that I did not engage any researcher participants that had a negative experience as such that it would deter them from accepting an invitation for an interview. This would have brought an epistemological richness to the research. The small number of research participants were

concentrated in more recent years of the program, this affected the findings as they were all reflecting on their experience as having happened recently. A sample representing a longer temporal period could yield themes of how long learning lasts, and how it changes (Patton 1990).

Interview Design

I drew on Vanessa Andreotti's (2001) use of postcolonial theory in a deeply material way; it guided this study, and my understanding of embodied relationships. Andreotti's imagining of postcolonial theory as "a set of extremely useful questions towards a way of thinking/feeling and forming relationships "otherwise" (i.e.: away from colonial violences)" (p. 142) has informed my questions in this study. The purpose of the interviews was to explore narratives of encounters between Intercordia student participants and host community members. The method I chose to ask student participants about their experiences was semi-structured interviews (See Appendices A and B). I asked questions about particular themes or tensions around global citizenship, vulnerability, mutuality and the building of relationships across difference. The themes I chose to ask about are the foundational themes and ethos of the Intercordia pedagogy and program. I wanted to understand how these themes were lived and felt by the student participants. What did it look like to live vulnerability? What was a moment of mutuality? I asked for specific moments or stories. I was interested in how the relational pedagogy of Intercordia was lived, from the perspective of student participants, what learning it prompted and what learning it challenged.

I conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with 12 student participants who had completed the Intercordia program. I designed the interviews to be interactive and humanistic, not tightly scripted. I maintained a position of self-reflexivity around my personal involvement in the program and field and how this influenced the data and the interviews (Creswell, 2003). I completed interviews with alumni who had a direct experience with disability in their placement overseas, whether that be in their volunteer work placement or living with a host family who lived with impairment or disablement. When I designed the interview script I did not include questions about disability. Instead, I asked for stories about moments of vulnerability, solidarity, challenge, success, and global citizenship. I wanted to see whether this would elicit stories about disability or impairment and what those would look like. Mainstream IESL and GCE or volunteer abroad programs,

like Cross-Cultural Solutions and Projects Abroad use disability specifically as a call to help, positioning those with disabilities in the South as in need of help, fixing, charity and pity. An individualized construction of disability is the call to action. The relationship is already framed for the participant from the North. The script is clear; both roles are structured for the incoming participant. The motivation is to save (insert group name here) in (insert country name here). I wanted to explore whether Intercordia's counter-cultural call to students, to not help, to not fix; an invitation to engage with those who are different in a different way, would allow students to engage outside this dominant cultural scripts and narratives. What does Intercordia's call for relationality with Southern disabled *others* look and feel like for Northern student participants? Does it allow them to engage in an intersectional analysis that takes up disability as located in specific policies, structures and systems in society, and not as an individual and medicalized condition. Where would they place themselves in relation to these unjust and oppressive structures?

All research participants got the questions in advance. I did this because the questions asked them to reflect on situations of deep learning, which could involve moments of hurt, vulnerability, conflict or difficulty and I wanted them to have time to mull the questions over, to think about a number of scenarios and then bring the ones they felt most important to the interview. Since the questions are so deeply personal, I thought it was better to give them to the participants in advance. And I felt that it might allow for deeper answers as they might take the time to engage in processing or reflecting in advance of the interview.

Summary of Participants

All of the research participants were student participant alumni of Intercordia, and had completed the program between 2012 and 2014. All were between the ages of nineteen and twenty-two when they completed the program. They participated in the program in their second, third or fourth year of academic study. Their fields of study were very broad and included: Political Science, Social Justice and Peace Studies, Psychology, Philosophy, Global Studies, International Studies, Anthropology with second majors in Great Books, French, First Nations Studies, Art History and Thanatology. Only three participants had completed an academic experiential learning experience before Intercordia, and one had participated in an international volunteer trip not connected to an academic course.

Interesting to note is that 25% of the participants were male. I make note of this, as it does not represent the typical gender balance of an IESL or GCE participant pool. In Intercordia,

typically there is about 1 male program participant to 10 female participants. I interviewed the male participants early in the process and quite close together, so early on in the interview process this felt significant. In terms of race, the participant pool was very white and all participants were Canadian. There were two racialized Canadian women and one racialized Canadian man.

One research participant identified as a non-normative sexual identity, which came out in a narrative about difference and acceptance of difference by Southern *others*. I did not ask whether participants identified as having a disability and no one claimed this identity. Participants spoke openly about their experiences with anxiety and changes in their mental health while in placement abroad, following a social model understanding of disability, relating these to structures outside themselves and not as a medicalized or individual understanding. I chose not to present a research participant profile because I want to remain faithful in my commitment to participants to have their reflections remain completely anonymous. The Intercordia community is small and I worried about the opportunity for identification of participants. This is a barrier to a robust intersectional analysis, however, I did engage with various ways they identified in certain reflections, for example around gender, disability and race, when it was necessary.

Two of the students I interviewed had completed the program and then gone on to mentor for the program. I asked them questions specific to their role as mentor (See Appendix B). Both were working as a mentor with an overseas partner organization that worked with people with disabilities. The role of the mentor in Intercordia is an integral piece of the in-placement programming. Intercordia envisions the role of the mentor as:

- Support program participants in their reflective work;
- Facilitate conversation around the formal reflection questions and program set out by Intercordia;
- Monitor and document the effectiveness and quality of the international programs (family placements, work placements and partner organization);
- Provide targeted intervention and support as requested by Intercordia or international partners;
- Assist participants in crisis, emergency or problem solving;
- Trust in and work with host organizations;
- Mentors will also live and work in the communities near program participants. This strategy is based on the philosophy that effective mentors often walk the same path with those they mentor (Intercordia 2014).

I asked them questions specific to their role in supporting students and gained interesting insights into how difficult and complex the role is lived, and how different it is for each person and each placement.

Consent

I created an informed consent form (See Appendices A and B) for participants to sign. I informed them that they would be participating in a one-hour interview that would be taped. I explained that they would remain anonymous and I would assign them a pseudonym and change any geographical or placement-specific markers that could identify them. I explained that this was completely voluntary and they could withdraw at any time. When I began each interview, I would verbally reaffirm that the study was anonymous, that they could choose not to answer any question at any time. I also offered for them to skip a question and come back, or skip a question and email me later with thoughts or reflections. Because of timing, there were interviews where I could not attend to all of the questions. I wanted to respect the time of the participants and naturally some themes took longer than others, so I did not ask every question to each participant. One participant chose to email me a number of written and edited reflections they had compiled after their experience. At times they would indicate that I could find a specific story that would answer the question in a specific reflection, instead of them re-telling the story in the interview. One participant asked to skip over the question about vulnerability, and asked to come back to this question at the end. They ended up disclosing a particularly difficult moment of sexual violence. This stood out to me for a number of reasons; firstly it was the only disclosure of this kind, and secondly that they were not ready in the temporal moment that I asked the question the first time, but was clearly ready as we moved through the interview and ended at a place where they felt comfortable and ready to share this experience. I reflected a lot about this particular interview and whether I responded in a good way to this disclosure. I am still not sure whether I did.

Risk to participants

I did not foresee any risk to participants and therefore did not spend a lot of time explaining what my research study was about. I sent them a brief synopsis and shared the questions with them in advance. No one asked for further information, with many expressing their eagerness to engage in the study. The only place where I think that this might be different is in the disclosure of sexual violence and how this might have been

traumatic for the participant to re-tell. As I mention above, I still feel anxiety around whether I held this story in a way that was doing the least amount of harm to the participant. I followed up after the interview to express this and affirm my support and openness to connecting again if they wanted to.

Data Gathering and Analysis

I asked the research participants a number of questions on the themes of: mutuality, vulnerability, encountering difference and global citizenship. I asked for specific stories or moments to explain these experiences or encounters. I asked them questions about before they started Intercordia, while they were in placement overseas, and after they completed the program. Throughout the interviews I would paraphrase a response to ensure that I understood the meaning they were assigning specific concepts. I intentionally did not ask explicit questions about impairment, disability, or disablement. The only question where this was included, was when I asked about being confronted by their privilege by the ‘Other,’ and their role in systems of domination, colonialism, ableism or oppression. I did this intentionally because I wanted to see how and whether participants would talk about disability or disablement. All of their volunteer placements were with organizations working with people with disabilities (and in one case the participant’s host family member had a sensory impairment), I wanted to know how this played out in their encounters and experience. After completing the interviews, I reflected on the intentionality of this choice. I was keen to hear where they understood success or challenge in relation to disability. Mainstream IESL and GCE programs that engage with disability are so focused on disability as a defining or essentializing element of the experience, the able helping the disabled, the growth that one experienced because of their relationship to the disabled, the better person one becomes because of the person with the disability. Not explicitly asking about disability would not stop this from happening, but I wanted to ask general questions about challenge, success, relationship and mutuality and see where disability or impairment organically came out. Secondly, I wanted to be intentional about breaking down the mutually exclusive able/disabled binaries and therefore needed to do this explicitly in my methodology. Understanding that people identify in diverse ways and live disability in diverse ways, I wanted to have my questions reflect this.

From my written notes, I coded the data and analyzed and pulled out themes. I followed Patton’s process, returning to my data “over and over again to see if the constructs,

categories, explanations, and interpretations [made] sense” (as cited in Creswell & Miller 2000: p. 125). I was looking for what I understood to be alternative or disruptive narratives in a field crowded with dangerous discourses, a theme I borrow from Margarit Shildrick’s *Dangerous Discourses of Disability, Subjectivity and Sexuality* (2009). I was surprised and excited by the diversity of the narratives that I gathered, I felt hopeful. With each interview bringing a new perspective or challenge to the hegemonic helping narratives. I paid particular attention to the themes where participants spent the most time, and where they spent the least time. My goal was not to fully capture and then represent what was said, but to highlight the major themes that I identified and how these themes speak to a set of disruptions to mainstream IESL and GCE programs and learning as a way to shine light on the hopeful and emancipatory parts of the field; cracks of light of new possibilities, of radical re-thinking and learning in this space.

I began by organizing the data into the broad themes that I was asking about in the interviews: difference, vulnerability, mutuality, global citizenship, privilege, and challenge from the Southern *other*. I then worked to pull out sub-themes and categories and how these spoke to the larger field of IESL and GCE. I then worked to pull out narratives that were constructing specific knowledge in each theme, where knowledge worked to disrupt mainstream IESL and GCE narratives where it reproduced them. I used what Denzin (1989) calls “thick descriptions are deep, dense, detailed accounts” (as cited in Creswell & Miller 2000: p. 128), long excerpts of direct quotations from these narratives, to establish credibility. And to allow readers to dive deep into the narratives of the lived affective experiences of the research participants, I looked for “statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in a study” (Ibid: p. 128).

My original plan was to go back to each participant with the thematic analysis, using this as what Creswell and Miller (2000) call a second lens to determine the validity of the research. Unfortunately I was unable to complete this second lens, due to time constraints and the pressures of writing a dissertation while being a full-time parent to an energetic toddler.

Limitations of This Study

My initial idea of this study was to have a comparative analysis of Southern hosts and Northern students, to highlight the dissonance between the expectations, impacts and benefits of the experience on the two groups. The study shifted and this isn't where I ended up. This study has a number of weaknesses that I want to move through; firstly, I participated in the formation and program of some of the student participant alumni that I interviewed, as their leader or mentor, with power in that position. I was upfront with them when I asked them questions, acknowledging this reality and asking them to trust that they could speak openly, but of course the power implications are still present. At times student participant alumni asked me for a reference for work or graduate school. This was all at play here. I don't know whether there were certain topics they engaged in self-censorship, or did not want to critique certain parts of the experience as they knew my investment in the program. Vrasti explains a struggle in her research with volunteers, "Living with people who would become my friends and the target of my critique" (2012: p. 14). I struggled with this too, as I have previously built relationships of trust with some of the research participants who I would then be critiquing. This certainly shaped the way I approached the research and analysis. This was always present and was a constraint and a richness. A tension that is irreconcilable; a part of my lens as researcher (Creswell & Miller 2000). Vrasti (2012) reminds us that "proving the ethical merit of volunteer tourism is always easier than showing that the formula is complicit with colonial and capitalist forms of rule" (p. 56). This is a danger I was constantly pulled into in this work.

Secondly, as I mentioned in my introduction to this chapter, I am intimately engaged in this work on many levels and therefore unable to disengage as another researcher might. Additionally, as I became into this research, I was also fully into my becoming as a parent for the first time. I completed all data collection and analysis and writing of this dissertation in the first and second year of my daughter's life. I had specific and limited time when I had access to childcare and this time became a space where I could focus on being a researcher, scholar, and had my body all to myself. I mention this as I was living through an emotional time of bringing a new baby into the world and the interviews I completed were also full of emotions. If I completed the interviews and analysis at a different time, one less intense of a new becoming, the analysis might look different. I understand this as a weakness but also as a gift. All of the data I collected was embedded in my years of experience and knowledge in this field. Thirdly, my position as an able-bodied researcher in this field is something I

struggle with. I understand my position in this research as being engaged in this space as an ally, as someone who wants to work towards the de-colonization of this space, which includes making it less disabling. I recognized, however, that first person voices are needed here, and not just through research conducted by allies, but by researchers who are racialized, disabled, and marginalized, because their questions would be different, which is epistemologically important in this space. I worry that I am reproducing what I am critiquing, the dis-embodied nature of the encounter. I did not explicitly ask participants whether they identified as disabled, subaltern, and therefore I was not able to ask questions about how this shaped their embodied experience. When writing up my findings, I realized my decision not to ask about specific encounters with disability reproduced a shortcoming in the field.

Lastly, I did not interview a student participant alumni who had a difficult experience that they weren't willing to work through; in other words, no one I spoke with was upset with the program, was hurt or angry, or did not think their experience was valuable as learning or for the encounters that came from it. This is a significant weakness. I did hear these narratives tangentially from mentors who walked through these situations and emotions with students but did not experience them themselves. I end this chapter with an overarching anxiety, as expressed by Karen Pashby (2012); she calls attention to the fact that the vast majority of writings about GCE, including this one, are from the positionality of the Global North, so how truly global is IESL and GCE? This is a tension that I cannot reconcile.

Gratitude

I was very struck by the gratitude from the student participants I interviewed on opening this reflective space from them. They often told me that they really enjoyed a certain question, that they had gone over their journal from their time in Intercordia, that they had begun to think differently about certain encounters or wanted to think more deeply about others. Many participants responded to my post-interview thank you email to them by expressing their gratitude for the time we spent together. This was an important piece of my research; participants were still in a space of wanting to think about their experience and how they had lived it. They wanted to think about things in new ways, using the questions that I asked them in the interview to move forward in their learning and reflections. Some expressed gratitude for a new lens or perspective in thinking about what they lived. This

demonstrated their openness to continuing the process of complicating and questioning these kinds of encounters. I was so grateful for my time with them and their willingness to stay engaged in the critical thinking. This study was a real gift.

Chapter Four: Case Study of Relational Encounters with Southern *Others*

[T]he creation of spaces that could facilitate the cultivation of an ethical responsibility towards “others” (Spivak, 1999) - towards those who have historically been excluded from the dialogue table and denied a subject position that could be projected as “global” (Andreotti 2011: 140).

Introduction

From the beginning I wanted this work to be a critique of the current ways that IESL and GCE operate and work to reproduce certain subjectivities, but also as a space that allows for imagining the ways in which these processes can be resisted and subverted, and to explore alternative and hopeful spaces that allow for engagement in complicated ways. What are ways that educators can make known to students, who will complete IESL and GCE experiences, that they are not separate from colonial and disabling processes? How can we engage them in the critical work that moves towards self-reflexivity and fosters a willingness to stay in this difficult and unsettling learning? Vanessa Andreotti's (2016) typology of who the Northern student engaging in IESL and GCE experiences is, gives us an entry into this discussion. Using her typology, I identify the type of student that is engaged in the Intercordia program.

The four-part typology organizes the categories of student types who engage in the space of IESL and GCE, and how these groups respond to and engage with critical material in this field. The first group of Northern students has a “surface-level overview of the issues that can inspire people to get involved in basic initiatives often related to charity or awareness raising” (p. 108). With this group, educators cannot problematize certain ideas, as there is no receptiveness to other ontologies or worldviews, they are characterized as needing to remain squarely in their comforting worldview. She envisions this orientation or way of being as “one seeking ‘awareness for inspiration’” (p. 108). Here, disability is understood as individual and medicalized, with IESL programs engaging in charity and pity programming, the holding of hands and bringing of joy. The second group is the most prevalent, or most typical orientation, they “deman[d] issues to be presented as problems to be solved where the focus should be on ‘practical solutions’ that can be easily implemented, monitored and evaluated” (p. 109). University groups like Engineers Without Borders or Global Glimpse are examples of IESL programs that this group are attracted to. She tells us that “[e]ffective engagement with this audience also requires familiar symbols and narratives to be communicated and for narratives of innocent agency in ‘making a

difference' to others to be celebrated" (p. 109). Here students are called to do for Southern *others*. She explains that this group engages in "problem solving for personal affirmation" (p. 109). Here the reflections presented in Chapter Two from volunteers in Projects Abroad and Cross-Cultural Solutions are salient. The interaction with the Southern disabled body makes the Northern volunteer better.

The third group begins to be open to critical thinking in this space, it is one that is "prepared to face the complexities of simplistic solutions, of uneven power relations and of the historicity and (geo-/bio-) political nature of knowledge production in terms of epistemological hegemony, and of self-implication in structural harms" (p. 109). This group is much more open to thinking about relationships of solidarity and ally-ship, and "is open to more radical critiques of power relations and to the voices of marginalised communities, proposed ways forward tend to re-center the modern subject and modern institutions and alternative voices are still re-coded in vocabularies that make sense within the modern onto-epistemic grammar" (p. 109). This group engages in "circular criticality" (p. 109); the analysis is still centered in Northern ways of making sense of the world. A radical openness to the *other* and what they can teach is still not completely present with this group.

The fourth group is "driven by a critique of ontological hegemony geared towards the uncertain exploration of different possibilities of existence beyond the modern subject, modern institutions (including the modern nation state) and of global capitalism – beyond the modern onto-epistemic grammar and the (contested, but enduring) modern/colonial imaginary" (p. 110). This is the critical group that is open to thinking outside the already known. In this group, people are open to the Southern *other* as knower, teacher, and are open to different ontologies, to making sense of the world using different modes, ways and language. Here, I imagine disability as being understood as contextual and cultural; the possibility that impairment in one culture is not understood as impairment in another. Unfortunately, this type of radical experience is mostly unfindable as it is "unintelligible for the vast majority of funding agencies" (p. 110). She names this group as engaged in "education for existence otherwise" (p. 110). I imagine the third and fourth groups as characteristic of the Intercordia student participants.

Intercordia Canada's Relational Model

The invitation of Intercordia is not to engage in different normative helping and saving narratives, but to imagine and encounter *others* in the spirit of being *with* and not doing *for*. It is an invitation to engage in relationships of mutuality with those marginalized as non-normative, but it is an invitation that does not close down the space for the Northern body to be non-normative as well. I do not imagine this case study as a way to counter the irrevocably bad with the inherently good. Instead I aim to flush out the places where this relational model functions as a different invitation to student participants and what narratives on learning come out of this engagement. I explore whether Intercordia opens a space where student participants can challenge the organizational forces that shape our consent to our current phase of capitalism and capitalist forms of community, what Vrasti (2010), influenced by Foucault, calls “a more tolerable, equitable, and pleasurable phase/face of capitalism” that “conceal[s] its tensions and postpone[s] its crises” (p. 2). Is the Intercordia program a space that invites and facilitates disruptions to this face/phase of capitalism? As discussed in the Chapter Two, the affective experience of IESL and GCE can serve as a steam valve; the pleasure of giving back to those in the South lulls us into believing that this phase of capitalism is ‘better’ or more benevolent than previous phases. Encounters are steeped in affective pleasure, and the thinking becomes: we don’t really need revolution, or complete overhaul of the system; instead there exists the opportunities to correct negative aspects of the system *within* the system. Instead of sowing seeds for revolution, encounters under IESL and GCE become an end in of themselves; the feel-good affective experiences that allow us to tolerate the inequities and violence of Capital and lull us into an acceptance of the tensions (Vrasti 2012). It is this affective pleasurable contradiction of Capital that must be disrupted in encounters in IESL and GCE. Learning about inequity and lived realities of those in the South - the ways in which global Capital marginalizes some bodies - should not be pleasurable, it should be labour-intensive, self-reflexive, difficult and heart-breaking and push one to radical new ways of thinking and being. I am interested in analyzing the Northern student participant learning under the Intercordia Canada model, as a case study looking at the learning these participants did about ways in which Southern disabled *others* are imagined and constructed in North-South encounters. Specifically understanding how participants experienced encounters that are structured to challenge capitalist forms of community (Vrasti 2010).

Intercordia Canada is an engaged, accredited experiential learning program. The Mission of Intercordia Canada is:

Intercordia Canada is a non-profit organization that partners with Canadian universities in order to offer students a unique, university accredited, engaged-learning experience. The goal of this innovative learning program is to encourage moral responsiveness, develop respect for diversity and a valuing of other cultures, religions and socio-economic backgrounds that will enable Canadian students to attain a well-educated solidarity with others who are different (Intercordia Canada 2016).

Intercordia was founded by Canadian Jean Vanier, philosopher and founder of L'Arche, which is an international federation of intentional communities of people with and without intellectual disabilities who share life together (L'Arche International, 2012). Vanier founded Intercordia with the same philosophy as L'Arche; as a place of hope where the meeting of two hearts would be small signs of peace in a world with so much conflict. Vanier (2003) states, "we can find the road to hope and peace in our world if we open ourselves to change, enter into true relationships, and break down the walls around our own hearts" (p. 8). The idea for the program came in collaboration with Vanier's friend Dr. Gilles Le Cardinale, who together were reflecting on the recent armed conflict in the Balkans and how it "could have been prevented had thousands of young people from around the world gathered on the streets demanding peace" (Intercordia Canada 2016). This is an overly simplistic, maybe even naïve imagining of the results of young bodies in public spaces. Rachel Gorman questions how this is any different than when hundreds of thousands spilled onto the streets before former United States President George Bush illegally invaded Iraq (personal communication, May 17, 2017). It is no different. Being in the streets did not stop the war.

The larger ethos of the program is to provide spaces for encounters across difference, however that difference might manifest, and to facilitate the space for relational encounters. The three major tenants of the program are:

1. "Being With" people is more important than "Doing For" them:
The primary intent of the Intercordia experience is not to change the world but to change our understanding of the world. Intercordia encourages participants to enter into a host community/family with a desire to learn and an attitude of openness and non-judgment. We want to discover both the beauty and distress of the people who welcome us into their lives, so we can better understand the complexity of the global village.

2. Encountering our weaknesses and vulnerability can be the source of significant growth and connection:

When we are strong and think we are in control, we can get things done, but we might miss out on opportunities to build relationships with others. The Intercordia experience is all about making friendships with people who are marginalized by injustice or circumstance and learning from them what is most valuable. When we let go of control and allow ourselves to be vulnerable it can feel incredibly uncomfortable.⁴ However, we often discover this can lead us to deeper knowledge of oneself as well as create a greater openness to connection with another.

3. The journey of learning is best made together:

Relationship and community are at the heart of the Intercordia experience. You will be immersed in your placement community, welcomed by our partners and locals and, for the time you are there, become part of their community. You will have the support of an Intercordia Mentor, who will be there to encourage, assist and help you to make the most of your experience. (Intercordia Canada, 2016).

The invitation to enter into encounters with the *other* is based in Vanier's belief that, like L'Arche, it is not about the marginalized person receiving help, or about the person with the disability needing help, it is about a radical mutuality. It is about what happens to both humans, through relationships of mutuality, the transformations that might be born out of relationships of difference. Vanier's vision is deeply rooted in relationship,

Communion is mutual trust, mutual belonging; it is the to-and-fro movement of love between two people where each one gives and each one receives. Communion is not a fixed state, it is an ever-growing and deepening reality . . . Community is mutual vulnerability and openness one to the other. It is liberation for both, indeed, where both are allowed to be themselves, where both are called to grow in greater freedom and openness to others and to the universe (1998: 28).

This informs the pedagogy of Intercordia as fundamentally being about inviting Northern students and Southern host participants into relationships of mutuality, where both work interdependently towards their shared liberation. This invitation is to enter into these relationships as the essential formation in the long work of peace. The start of the 'knowing the world' between differing economic actors under Capital (Freire 1970: 8).

Intercordia Program Foundations

The program has four major components: a full-year academic course, four formation days led by Intercordia staff over the academic year, a three month placement

⁴ Intercordia has developed the mentor position to take up the emotional labour to support this vulnerability, so the (majority of the) labour does not fall to hosts.

overseas, and, upon return, a two-day re-integration seminar in Canada (Intercordia Canada, 2016). The international placements where student participants complete their 3 month experience are in the following countries: Ghana, Rwanda, Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, and nationally in L'Arche communities across Canada. The focus on the immersive time abroad is rooted in the founding mission statement of Intercordia:

University students across Canada graduate with well educated minds. Intercordia Canada's concern is that this achievement be matched by the equally important education of the heart. In the course of their university education, students must let the gritty reality of this world enter their lives, so they can feel it, think about it critically and engage it constructively. When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change. An education of the heart occurs when students form relationships with others who live lives differently than they do, particularly with those who experience marginalization and distress. These relationships can provoke intellectual inquiry and moral reflection, which can encourage a student to work for positive change in Canada and the world (Intercordia Canada, n.d.: 1).

This speaks directly to the name of the program, Intercordia: between two hearts. This is really the simplest distillation of the mission: to foster encounters between hearts, which is fertile ground for deep and transformational learning, fully engaging the affective of the experience. The preparation for the program is extensive. There is a rigorous expectation of critical and intellectual engagement; participants are enrolled in an academic course at the partnered Canadian University, attend holistic seminar preparation and debriefing facilitated by Intercordia Canada and are supported while in placement in the Global South by a trained Intercordia mentor. It is this commitment to in-depth and critical preparation and emotional and reflective support to facilitate deep learning while in placement that characterizes Intercordia's commitment to relationality.

The enduring and legitimate critique of Vanier's consistent refusal to engage in explicit critique of Capital or political power is highlighted by Gorman's (personal communication, May 17, 2017) questioning of simply saying young people asking governments to stop an oppressive act does not work, that justice and peace is more complicated. I grew up hearing questions from those around me in L'Arche of why Vanier would not make a statement challenging the Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti when he visited the country or why he would not make explicit political statements on disablement, calling politicians to account. Instead he talks about the day to day commitment to relationship with

the *other*. Intercordia's preparation politicizes the space within which these relationships happen; through the academic course taught at the partner University and the seminar preparation where discussion of privilege and power that mediate encounters is an ever-present conversation. Intercordia's training of the how to be in relational solidarity with others who are marginalized under Capital is based in 50 years of living in intentional communities of people with and without intellectual disabilities (L'Arche).

The academic component of Intercordia is integral to the experience, where student participants are enrolled in a specifically designed university course that is led by a faculty member at their university. The formal education piece is critical in intellectually preparing students to engage in constructive ways, making known the processes of colonialism, imperialism and unjust global structures of power and discourses. Alongside the academic course, students engage in the Intercordia seminar formation program, animated by Intercordia staff. Each campus partner has their own seminar program, led by two Intercordia staff, one of who is traditionally a long-term L'Arche person, bringing with them L'Arche pedagogy and experience of living in community. They meet four times over the year, for an all-day Saturday seminar covering the following broad themes: Who Am I?; Belonging; Cultural Adjustment; Survival and Learning; and What to Expect and Letting Go of Expectations (Intercordia: n.d.A). The group also meets for a send-off supper before they depart, which is titled 'Arriving in your placement with a grateful heart' (Ibid). The formation program covers a significant breadth of preparation material, and is also a space for the building of community, which students often need as they do not have experience living in community. They have a desire to live community, but do not have practical experience to live it well, and are not ready for the intensity and difficulty that comes with living with others in intimate ways.

The Intercordia invitation to student participants is that they do not choose their international placement from a drop-down menu of choices. Throughout the seminars, the Intercordia staff gets to know the student participants and their gifts and challenges. At the second seminar the placements are introduced, highlighting the work of the partner NGO in country, and often alumni come and talk about their experience in the placement. The student participants then engage in an exercise to dig deep into the concept of choice and privilege; what it means to have the privilege to make choices, who is entitled to that choice and who is not. Student participants are encouraged to think about what it means to engage

in a program where they will enter the lives of others and situations of poverty because they chose to do so, and not because of historical conditions. Student participants then fill out a three-page questionnaire with questions like “What strengths or gifts do you think you will bring to your host community/work project?” and “What is your greatest concern about being in an Intercordia placement?” and “What do you expect will be your greatest need while in your placement?” (Intercordia n.d.A: p. 62-63). They are asked what kind of supports they think they will need, whether they want to be close or far away from another participant, and whether they are drawn to a specific placement and why. They are also asked whether they are open to being sent to any placement, whether they are open to trusting Intercordia to make that choice for them. The intentionality behind the process in choosing the international placement looks different from the mainstream programs taken up in Chapter Two. In mainstream programs, participants choose from a list of choices, with no process, no guidance, no context or conversation. It is a transaction like shopping online for a new shirt or pair of pants. The encounter is already structured as something you choose, something you have control over, about your desires and your self-development. Intercordia attempts to resist this by having a larger more intentional conversation. This does not mean a choice in placement is equal to living in poverty – structured by a lack of choice and autonomy – but it is an exercise to open a more complex conversation about privilege and access, who can make choices and who is unable to, due to ways Capital organizes and structures economies and relations.

The next piece of the Intercordia program is the three months spent living in an overseas placement, or in a L’Arche community in Canada. Intercordia is partnered with small, grassroots not-for-profit organizations in eight countries, and these organizations are the ones that facilitate the three-month in-country placements. The organizations are diverse in their missions, work and philosophies, and all have a desire to welcome student participants to their communities, to live with families connected to the organization, and to work alongside them in the work they do (Intercordia 2016). This might be living with a host family in Lviv, Ukraine and volunteering in a L’Arche workshop each day; it might be living with a host family in La Ceiba, Dominican Republic and volunteering on the re-forestation brigades in the mountains; or living with a host family in Gisenye, Rwanda and volunteering in an inclusive school founded by the Umbumwe Community Centre.

There is a material dimension to the relationship between the host organization and the hosted students. Intercordia works collaboratively with each host organization in the Global South to design a budget to compensate the labour of the host organization in hosting the students, which includes: their labour in planning the program over the year before the students arrive, including the labour of selecting and working with the host families that will welcome the students and the work placements where the students will volunteer; picking up the students from the airport; orientation when the students arrive; supporting the students while in placement; reflection times together; costs for transportation while students are in placement; a final debrief weekend before they leave; and to transport them to the back airport for departure. Each host family is paid to host the student for the duration of their time with the organization, to cover the costs of food and water and other costs incurred in hosting students. There is also an emergency contingency fund that can be used for things like transporting students to the hospital, or other costs incurred to the host organization or family.

The final component of the Intercordia program is a two-day re-integration seminar that is mandatory for all students, in addition to a post-placement reflection paper submitted to the professor at their respective university. The two-day re-integration seminar is facilitated by Intercordia staff and provides a space and time for students to begin to unpack their experiences, talk about their challenges and times of beauty, to complete thoughtful reflection and self-reflexivity, and to participate in group activities with others who have lived their own Intercordia experience. Each experience is unique, and the strength of the communal re-integration lies in that difference, acknowledging that each student participant lived their own experience, including all the difficult and beautiful parts, understood as not mutually exclusive (Vanier 1998).

A Space for Disrupting Neoliberal Subject Formation?

The pedagogy of Intercordia invites Northern students into a space of learning and living relational solidarity (Springer 2016). Its assertion that through relationships with the *other*, we understand that the oppression of those in the Global South, structured by neoliberalism, is an oppression of all; it is our own oppression too. And that living alongside those who are different in order to understand this from them, on their terms, from their way of being in the world, is how we will understand colonial and neo-colonial oppression and our role in it. It is an invitation to a relational experience of solidarity, a disruption to the

neoliberal ways of relating and being with the Southern *other*. Here I ask whether the Intercordia program opens a space for the disruption of subject formation under neoliberalism taken up in Chapter Two. Do student participants engage in an education and formation that creates a space that facilitates difficult learning rooted in relational solidarity (Springer 2016)? I ask whether learning, facilitated through Intercordia, can be understood as disruptive and what this looks like. I am confronted by the troubling question of the possibility for subjects formed under neoliberalism, to engage in mutual relationships with those who are marginalized by the same neoliberal system, with those “de-subjectified, included only by virtue of their exclusion from social protections and democratic participation” (Neal 2008: 51 in Vrasti 2012: 128). If entering into relationships of mutuality across difference is the foundational ethos of Intercordia, can these relationships be truly possible when we are engaging in encounters so deeply divided by those who are formed as valued global citizen subjects, and those who are de-subjectified by Capital and processes of neoliberalism? Is it possible within a totalizing system of neoliberalism that “appropriate[s] all manner of political discourse and imperatives” (Barnett 2005; Birch 2015; Lewis 2009; Ong 2007 in Springer 2016: 4)? Vanier believes that these encounters can lead to the formation of mutual relationships, and indeed founded L’Arche and Intercordia as a space where these encounters can happen, believing that these spaces are signs of hope and peace and the possibility that comes from these encounters (Vanier 2012). L’Arche was founded as a counter-cultural space to resist the pressures of Capital that work to marginalize certain bodies and celebrate others. Intercordia was founded for similar reasons. Freire (1970) asks us to reflect on the dual nature of dehumanization; that those who dehumanize others are also dehumanized (though in different ways). And lays out the path to emancipation not as one where the oppressed take the role of the oppressors, but work towards a shared emancipation. Leila Angod cautions, “[i]f we believe that we share a common humanity, then we must consider how we dehumanize others even as, and especially when, we imagine that we are helping them” (2015: 192). I do not imagine that all Intercordia student participants will engage in relationships of mutuality, or that each one necessarily even *desires* to disrupt their formation as subjects under neoliberalism. Instead, I want to understand what that looks like in this particular space, and the tensions and challenges involved in this complex subversive work. What does it mean to evoke mutuality within unequal power relations, between marginalized Southern *others* and Northerners with privilege? Is this even a possibility? The need for responses and resistance to the current phase of capitalism need to be collective and transdisciplinary in nature. How do we engage

students to do real critical thinking in this space, before they go, while they are there, and after they return? How, as educators, do we invite students to enter into Judith Butler's imagining of critique, the:

opening up the possibility of questioning what our assumptions are and somehow encouraging us to live in the anxiety of that questioning without closing it down too quickly? Of course, it's not for the sake of anxiety that one should do it . . . but because anxiety accompanies something like the witnessing of new possibilities (in Salih & Butler 2004: 333).

This is the difficult work of engaging Northern students in difficult learning, asking them to stay in the space of anxiety to possibly witness new possibilities, inviting them into the space of learning as "contextual and difficult" (Andreotti 2001: 21).

There are many complexities and barriers to the alternative invitation to enter an encounter across difference in neoliberal times, where encounters are structured as ones where Northerners are invited to care for, help, and liberate the disabled Southern *other*. Indeed, doing *for* others is the basis for almost all IESL and GCE experiences, which is an easy, feel-good and celebrated act in this pleasurable phase of capitalism (Vrasti 2010). The shift to doing *with* othered *others* in the South, at their pace and on their terms, is complicated and frustrating for both the participant and the one welcoming the participant. It takes significant time and commitment as it is deeply counter-cultural work. Indeed it is hard for Northerners to do *with*, even when this is what they state, or imagine, that they desire to do. They can quickly become disillusioned, bored, angry, frustrated and move into the mode of doing *for*, or just opting out, of the experience and focusing on traveling, or interacting with other Northerners (Vrasti 2010). Indeed, this is a marker of the privilege those from the North carry in this space; they don't even have to engage in the volunteer work they went to complete when it becomes tedious or monotonous. The choice is theirs. This choice sits in stark contrast to those in the South who engage in tedious and monotonous work to survive in situations of poverty and injustice.

Searching for Disruptions

I now turn to the narratives that came out of my semi-structured interviews with student participant alumni of the Intercordia program. All of the research participants were student participant alumni of Intercordia, and had completed the program between 2012 and 2014. All were between the ages of nineteen and twenty-two when they completed the program. They participated in the program in their second, third or fourth year of study. Their fields

of study were very broad and included: Political Science, Social Justice and Peace Studies, Psychology, Philosophy, Global Studies, International Studies, Anthropology with second majors in Great Books, French, First Nations Studies, Art History and Thanatology. Three participants had participated in another experiential learning program before the Intercordia program, and one had participated in an international volunteer trip not connected to an academic course. Research participants were predominately female, twenty-five percent of the participants were male. They were predominately white Canadians, three research participants were racialized Canadians. One participant self-identified with a non-normative sexual identity, this came out in a story about difference and acceptance by the Southern *other*. I did not ask whether participants identified as having a disability and no one claimed this identity. Participants spoke openly about their experiences with anxiety and changes in their mental health while abroad in placement, very much following a social model understanding of disability, embedding their experiences in structures outside themselves, and not as a medicalized or individual understanding.

I ask whether their reflections create meaningful disruptions to ableist and disabling discourses of IESL and GCE. I looked for moments of disruption to the disabling discourses that operate on simplistic and binary understandings of complex and structural issues. I identify the times where student participants were open to remaining in complexity; signalling a movement away from the rush to consolation or resolution (Andreotti 2010: 14) which is so natural for Northerners shocked and outraged by what they are learning, yearning for positive and enact-able answers that they can engage in. Is this a possible space to imagine an-‘other’ global citizenship education (Andreotti & DeSouza 2012)? The beginning of a space? Andreotti’s concept of doing this work *otherwise* is a response to the current ways in which IESL and GCE programs do not include “perspectives that are based on ontological assumptions that challenge Western humanism” (2010: 5). In other words, ways of being otherwise that are outside the Western way of understanding the world, with the self and reason being at the centre.

The interview questions in my study asked Intercordia student alumni to reflect on specific pieces of the three broad tenets of Intercordia; the value of being with people over doing for them (mutuality), that our own vulnerability allows us to enter into relationship with those around us in deeper ways, and that learning is best done in community (Intercordia 2016). In this chapter, I aim to illuminate the ways in which the Intercordia

invitation and framework is intimately *lived out* by student participants, and the specific ways they talk about how they entered into relationship with the Southern *other*. I wanted to know how this framework translated into how they imagined the Southern *other* and how they engaged in the *being with* those who are different. What did vulnerability look like for them, as an individual and in relation to the community they were living in? Was the call to learn in community, with others, from others, something that could challenge Chouliaraki's (2013) critique of the emotionality of the self? That these experiences are more about the person engaging in the good humanitarian work, and not about the marginalization of the *other*? I work to make known how student participants engaged in mutuality in relationship, and how they imagined this experience for the *other* in the encounter. Are there moments of "mutual valuing of relations and [a] refusal to objectify" (Heron 2007: 68)? The encounters within these experiences are deeply raced, gendered and classed, and disabled. This cannot change; we are not living in postcolonial times. We enter geographical spaces marked by colonial and imperial violence that was and is engaged in by certain bodies, upon certain bodies. Student participants are entering into Southern geographical spaces with their Northern bodies, shrouded in privilege and the benevolent helping imperative (Heron 2007). This of course looks different depending on identity. Razack's (2009) work with racialized social work students in practicum placements is important here. Disruptions to the reproduction of colonial and imperial violence and oppression are possible. It is these moments of interruption I am interested in exploring with this case study. In research with host families who welcome Intercordia student participants (MacDonald & Vorstermans 2015) we found that host families and community members experienced relationships of mutuality with student participants and reported this as a strength of the program. Hosts told us that they engaged in the program because it allowed for, or made space for encounters of mutuality, a period of time to learn from one another, to share more about each other's world and build relationships.

As I engaged in the analysis of the interview data, I visually mapped out the responses to the themes that I asked about. I looked for reoccurring words, repetition of ideas or anxieties that participants verbalized, I looked for things that they did not say or themes that they did not attend to. I read and coded the interview data with the desire to identify and pull out moments of disruption to colonial, disabling, and simplistic narratives of encounters. As I worked through the analysis I grouped them under four different sites of disruption; vulnerability as facilitating disruption, mutuality as a disruption, disruptions to

disability as individual and finally I explored responses to disruptions from the Southern *other*.

Colonial Nature of the North-South Encounter

I begin with a reflection on the deeply colonial nature of the North-South encounter (Mahrouse 2014). One student participant, Casey, described a moment that revealed this in a profound and explicit way when they described a time they were hiking up a mountain with members of their host family, moving through land they had not entered before;

We were getting up there, and it was my first time they took me past his farm. Like, even more you know, North, I guess... it was so early in the morning and it started to rain. And, my host brother and my dad, like, I couldn't understand, they were making, they didn't want me to know what was going on, they talked really, like, just talked normally, so I knew they were talking about something, cause usually if I was there, they would try and talk slowly, so I knew it was something I wasn't supposed to know, and then, we like walked by a house and some man, like, yelled something really aggressively at them. And I was like, what did he say? And, they were like, nothing. Nothing. And then we walked by someone else, and later they said something, and then finally at, like. It eventually stopped raining, so then we stopped for lunch and I like was good at getting [my host brother] to tell me things, so I was like, what's happening? ... They are, I think it's like, a tradition or like a belief that the mountains, there is a Spirit, and when, I think the original story was something like a white man came in on a white horse, and the mountains like wanted them to leave, like the white warrior, so the mountains washed them out through rain. And through like, river, like the rivers overflowed and the rain washed them out, so then they said that now, every time, like a white person comes up to that part of, like, I forget which mountain it was, um, they wash them out. So, it was raining, and everyone were, like farming, so the people, like, were making comments being like "you made it rain, you brought her here" ... I was like, oh my gosh, we need to leave. Like, I think the mountain wants me to go... I think this is true. ... And [my host brother] was like, it's ok, it stopped raining, the mountain accepted you ... I didn't feel fully accepted, and I don't think I should have been.

As Casey told me this story, they laughed nervously, still unsure about how it would be understood, maybe still unsure about how to feel about such a deeply significant encounter. I understand this story as one that reveals the deeply colonial nature of encounters in IESL and GCE in a real and tangible way. The entering of Northerners to the Southern space, living with host families who bring them to places that they would not have access to on their own, are significant intrusions in the lives of the Southern *other*. Casey was open to listening to what the host family had to teach, and felt an anxiousness about their presence on lands that they were not wanted on because of colonial violence that settlers had enacted. This encounter makes known the impossibility of reconciling the intrusive presence of the Northerner in the Southern space, a space that has been colonized and violated. This

encounter makes known the violence of Northerners entering spaces that have and do experience colonization. Casey is nervous and unsure, but for those whose land Casey entered, this was violence. Casey's openness to listening to the Southern *other* and the acknowledgment that they should not be accepted in such a space is movement forward in acknowledging the colonial nature of the encounter. Remaining uneasy and uncomfortable is necessary; acknowledging the colonial nature of the encounter as disruptive, and fertile ground for deep learning. However, the reality of impact still remains; the learning happened because the Northerner entered into a space where they were not wanted, based in historical and current violence lived by Indigenous people. I want to bring this to the discussion on disruptions, the disruptions in student learning happen because of profound material disruptions in the lives of Southern *others*, and as taken up in Chapter Two, this is often most profound in the lives of people with disabilities in the South whose very existence is imagined as dependent on the care of others. The identity of Northerner is of course complex, and Souths exist in the North (Goodley 2011; Grech 2015). Intercordia student participants have been Indigenous from Canada or racialized, and therefore enter Southern spaces in very different ways (Razack 2001; 2002).

Encountering Difference: Integral to the Invitation

The invitation from Intercordia to encounter difference, to enter into relationships with those who are different, is not unique in the field of IESL and GCE. Indeed the foundational summons of IESL and GCE is to meet the *other*, and to engage in cross-cultural encounters. The highly specific way Intercordia articulates and scripts this encounter with difference is one based in the Vanier call to 'being with' and not 'doing for' the *other*. The pedagogy challenges the construction of who is imagined as the helper, who is imagined as needing help, and who is entitled to engage in the act of helping. The invitation is to encounter difference by being *with* those who are different, and not by helping or doing for those who are different. This invitation asks student participants to meet the Southern *other* as expert, knower and agent in their own lives, society, culture, and country, and not as passive recipient of helping, saving, or theorizing. Northern students are not invited to help or save, but to meet, to be with, to live with, and to learn from Southern *others*. I was interested in hearing how Intercordia alumni heard this call to encounter difference, and how they translated the invitation in their own learning about their encounters with Southern *others*. They explained understanding this invitation as one to remain committed to being open to the Southern *other*, as a challenge to the helping

narrative and the belief that Northern knowledge is the only way of knowing, and as a call to focus on difference and not move to engage with neoliberal tropes of universality and sameness.

Taylor, a student participant, explained their response to the invitation to encounter difference as a commitment to remain open. They explained that they worked to make space for the new culture they were living in, and focused on learning to move towards understanding the *other* by being with the *other*. Taylor explained their experience with Southern *others* as: “You are being, they are being, being together.” In their reflections I heard the openness to being with others of difference as something natural, without a need to move to explain away differences, or minimize differences, but to being open to living with difference. Another participant, Casey, explained that their approach of encountering difference was to be one of actively celebrating difference and not fearing it. Casey explained that at first they tried hard not to be different, that they didn’t want to be understood as disruptive in their own difference in the culture and family. But then after about a month and a half, they moved towards allowing themselves to embrace their own difference, saying that this allowed them to be in relationship in a new way, one they felt was more authentic. The performance of non-difference was not authentic or productive in the making of relationship for Casey. This was a process of learning for Casey. They explained that it took a month and a half of being, reflecting and thinking about ways that they were living in the host community until they moved into the celebration of their own difference. The three-month timeframe allowed for the heavy intellectual work, something that is not facilitated in shorter programs (Roddick 2014).

In a short documentary on Intercordia, one of Intercordia’s overseas partners in Ecuador explained the invitation to Northern participants like this: “when you are in your 20s, you have all this energy, and you want to change everything, and you think you are going to be the next saviour. But that is not true” (McLean 2014). Bo, one of the student participants, explained that when they first heard this invitation - the documentary was shown in the preparation seminar - they thought, “Who is he?” They were cynical of this deeply provocative invitation. But upon reflection in their placement, this invitation was pivotal for them. Bo explained that their experience centered around thinking through this challenge to the normative narrative of helping, saving and changing the world. Intercordia, for Bo, was about a much smaller invitation to be with the *other*, to be in relationship with the marginalized and not as a call to help or save. This reflection illuminates the deeply held

cultural belief of the Northerner as benevolent helper in the South (Jefferess 2001, Heron 2007). Bo was shocked that the Southern *other* would challenge their energy and desire to change the world, their inherent right to save or intervene.

Another participant, Hunter, heard the Intercordia invitation to encounter difference as one that called them to being open to challenging all they held as objectively right and objectively wrong. For them, it was a call to understand even one's so-called objective truths as ones that are malleable and constructed. Hunter explained that it was uncomfortable for them to enter this space of learning, to think through how even the obviously 'right' needs to be suspended, as one entering a space that is not one's own, convinced you hold truth, has dangerous implications. Hunter explained that they concretely worked through this in the formation seminars when they were asked to think through a complex situation of corporeal punishment in local schools in an overseas placement. Hunter reflected on their desire to remain open to complexity in all situations, that the objectively right was a fantasy of our own making. This willingness to remain open to complexity and uncertainty was a beautiful reflection to talk through, an openness to imagining other ways of being outside the centering of Western reasoning (Andreotti & DeSouza 2012).

The last narrative of encountering difference I want to take up provides a strong critique to the neoliberal narrative of difference needing to be met with the move to celebrate underlying sameness, universality or the uniting features we all share. The narrative that we need to move past difference to find the sameness that unites us all, the shared humanity that makes us all the same. This can be a move to erase differences that are not valued, such as impairment and mental or physical non-normativity. Jamie explained that they heard Vanier's invitation to encounter difference as one that asks us to focus on difference, to engage with difference in its complexity, and to work to actively understand and see value in that difference. We are being asked to celebrate difference and work to understand the *other* with their differences, and not despite of their differences. For Jaime the call was to resist the move to push differences aside in a way that obscures the complexity and inequities constructed on those differences. I am reminded of Audre Lorde's (1984) work on the necessity of acknowledging the sites of difference that black women face (class, race, gender) in effecting social and political change and that we must celebrate these differences, make them known. If we make the move to universality or sameness, these sites of difference are erased and therefore cannot be confronted as sites of power and

inequity. Jaime, a white woman, engaged in this heavy intellectual work, entering into this uncomfortable and counter-cultural analysis, digging deep into our culturally held responses to difference. There was a desire to engage with difference in all of its complexity, and not to move to erase differences, which then moves to erase the structural inequities that are built on these differences.

Vulnerability as Disruptive

One of the pieces of this study that I was most interested in exploring in the interviews was the theme of vulnerability, as it is so foundational for Intercordia's invitation to being with the Southern *other*. In the framing of the Intercordia experience, vulnerability is constructed as a natural part of our humanness - loneliness and isolation are integral part of the human experience - and it is employed as a tool to get into the work of mutuality. This construction is forwarded to enable student participants to stay in this difficult space in a good way. In Chapter One I explored the construction of the Southern *other* in mainstream IESL and GCE programs. This construction often employs the ascribing of vulnerable to the *other* and need for the Northerner to help that vulnerable *other*. The unruly body is always the Southern disabled body, helped and brought joy to by the Northern helper. Intercordia intervenes in this construction and invites the Northern student participant to engage deeply with their own vulnerability, discovering the ways they are vulnerable, and posits that it is through this self-reflexive process that mutuality in relationship with the *other* is possible. The Northerner announcing one's own vulnerability is a way of performing unruliness in the helper/helped binary that structures IESL and GCE experiences. The deep emotional labour of naming and announcing one's vulnerability challenges the script of the benevolent Northern helper. This labour is supported through active reflection and mentorship, while Northerners are preparing for their overseas experience and while in placement, in an attempt to have the support involved in this process not fall to Southern hosts.

I heard a wide diversity of ways in which participants experienced vulnerability in their overseas placements and their answers provide meaningful disruptions into the helping and saving narratives that characterize the field of IESL and GCE. Participants did not self-identify as helpers, as bearers of knowledge or expertise, and they did not assume they would be capable of navigating the complex social and cultural norms of the host country. Some participants talked about the process of deeply embracing their own vulnerability; the movement from feeling unable to engage, communicate or be with others to the learning and

accepting that this is a natural state - a state of vulnerability - and that they wanted to stay in, and to start to learn why it is valuable. Vulnerability was a sort of freedom for them - a freedom from the scripts of benevolent Northern helper, a problematically constructed position, an imagined one, that cannot be realized. Intercordia's invitation to acknowledge one's own vulnerability as an integral part of their experience, as the fertile ground for entering into meaningful and mutual relationships, allowed them to enter more deeply into encounters with Southern *others*. The permission to acknowledge their own vulnerability, that they are not the saviour of the *other* and that they are not there to help, change, or make better, gave them a sort of freedom from the unattainable position of benevolent helper.

Overall, I heard that student participants felt they were well prepared to live the experience of cultural adjustment, vulnerability, and newness in their overseas placement. However, this preparation did not mean they did not feel overwhelmed and isolated when they arrived. Many expressed that they were surprised at the extent of how deeply they felt this isolation. One student participant, Casey, explained this feeling as, "I didn't know how to exist." Student participants talked about knowing, on an intellectual level, that they would feel vulnerable, isolated and scared, but that the lived experience of these feelings was more overwhelming and difficult than they had anticipated. Each participant who talked through experiencing vulnerability and a sense of isolation and loneliness worked through it as a natural reaction to living in a new culture, - where everything around them was unfamiliar - and did not externalize this process as being one that was about the environment around them. They often named the first one and a half months as a very difficult, lonely, and unsettling time. They did not fully intellectualize what it would be like to live this deep sense of loneliness. The openness to name this time of vulnerability is itself disruptive; naming one's vulnerability in this space is not an expectation of a good neoliberal subject.

The narratives around vulnerability were complex and reflected the desire of the student participants to dig into their own vulnerabilities, to explore what it feels like to stay in one's vulnerability and name it as a time of growth and possibility rather than making instant moves to cover up or push aside feelings of vulnerability. Participants gave concrete stories of vulnerability, what it looked and felt like to feel vulnerable and where that moved them to in their learning. Their stories revealed how staying in their own vulnerability moved them to a deeper and more difficult learning, and an openness to the *other* as knower and teacher. Lastly, the pedagogy of vulnerability was also lived through the praxis of the

mentors who live with student participants in their overseas placements, as the modeling of vulnerability extended to mentorship.

Vulnerability as difficult and generative

Living vulnerability was not easy for many participants. There is no dominant cultural script for living vulnerably when one is able bodied and privileged. The assigning of vulnerability is only for some bodies. One student participant, Casey, talked through the process of embracing their own vulnerability and how hard it was in the beginning to not know how to *be* in any way that was familiar or known to them. Casey explained that they felt bad that they did not speak the local language, did not know the local sign language, and that they felt selfish for imposing on the community, for being there for their own growth and learning, and had anxieties about doing harm. Casey explained that they engaged in internal processing and work in reflecting on why they were feeling these anxieties, and eventually moved to find learning in this state of vulnerability. Casey described it as a movement to being humbled by their experience when they realized that their ascribed worth was a constructed worth;

I have very few life skills. [Laughter] Well... I am smart, I can, like dance, I can swim. Things, you know you think you can do. That are like, maybe held here as worth something. And then I got there and I was like, no actually I can't cook you guys dinner, I can't clean properly, I don't know how to cut wood, like, I don't have language skills, I was like - I don't have very many tangible skills. And my host brother, who is like, fifteen, and can do a million things, so it was really humbling, to be like, I have so much to learn about life.

Casey was open to challenging what is constructed as valued or meaningful in Northern society, of embracing their new way of being in a culture where they did not have valuable or meaningful skills. Instead of using the South as a space to reify their position as expert or helper (Heron 2007, Vrasti 2012), Casey entered into a learning about the construction of what is valued under neoliberalism (social capital) and what are tangible skills (life sustaining and reproducing activities), and the disconnections between the two.

Another student participant, Jamie, worked through the invitation to vulnerability as a tool to challenge their self-described “simplistic” understanding of feminism as one that centers on women taking power. Here, vulnerability led to a generative learning, a deepening in learning. Jamie explained that they entered the program with the idea that feminism was the movement of women taking power, and the need for a re-imagining of women as being strong and able and not weak and vulnerable. They explained that this was

met with the Intercordia invitation to live vulnerability in a way that interrogated this conception of feminism and they began to ask whom this construction of feminism might marginalize or oppress. Jamie began to question how this might be an ableist construction of feminism, and can work to further marginalize some women. Jamie's analysis explained that this analysis was enabled by the invitation to accept and embrace human vulnerability as a way of entering into more mutual and just relationships with the *other*. Jamie engaged in a difficult analysis that interrogated their own internalization of ableism, using vulnerability to push them into this difficult learning. This was the first time I heard a reflection about IESL and GCE that centered ableism in an explicit and meaningful way.

Vulnerability as freedom

One student participant, Hunter, explained how they worked at unpacking the normative narratives of changing the world and the humanitarian imperative of the Northerners as helper (Heron 2007). They said,

I feel like, Intercordia it gives you the experience, it's like, it already gives you the whole vulnerability bit, in that, like, you know that you are not really capable - like, there's no. You can't be like, actively saying, "I gotta go out and make change, and it has to be me, and I have to go change things. Um, so on one hand you can't really say that. On the other hand, you can't just dismiss it as like, an experience you had and it's over . . . Now that I've done it, I stay that it stays with me and it makes me want to have more, like sort of. I had such strong relationships and connections with people that I met there, and I think that that is pretty great, and it, because of that, it makes it impossible for me to say it was just a learning experience and it's over. Um, it's like, an on- it has to be an on-going thing, that I am - and I want to continue.

Hunter struggled to think through what they want to say here and ended with "I don't think that I am going to go out and change the world or whatever. Cause I think Intercordia makes you think twice about having that sort of mentality." Here Hunter is engaged in disrupting the IESL and GCE constructions of the Northern helper. Their learning included naming their own vulnerability, their own littleness in the face of large structural problems that cannot be solved through the actions of the individual. I understand this as a freedom from these false and oppressive narratives; the fantasy that we can save or change the world, that the answer to structural problems is individual response. There is the reproduction of neoliberalism in this space, where individuals, and not systems, must make change. Vrasti (2012) speaks to the participants' disillusionment with this desire to change the world, because their desire is one that is bound to fail, which can leave them feeling empty and disempowered. The tools of Capital cannot fix the contradictions of capitalism; volunteer

abroad will not make the world a more just place. The call to embrace one's vulnerability, in contrast, is achievable. It takes self-reflexive processing work and time, which Hunter explains as a process of freedom that moved them to seek out more authentic mutual relationship and connection. Here vulnerability was generative and emancipatory.

Vulnerable mentors

I interviewed two student participants who later served as mentors for Intercordia, and both positioned the role of mentor as essential. I asked them specific questions about their role as mentor, which is rooted in the pedagogy of journeying with student participants, and is a call to be with student participants in their difficult learning, not moving to make their learning comfortable or easy. I was struck by the way the two mentors spoke about struggles and emotions that student participants lived, in very complex ways. There was no employment of medicalized mental health language and no move to individualize what student participants were living. The mentors revealed their understanding of student participant's struggles as being a normal process, not as abnormal or stigmatized. One of the mentors, Kana, talked about their own struggles with change and living the experience well, and I was struck by their construction of struggle or anguish as normal, part of the human experience, and something that they wanted to strive to live well. Kana did not move to eliminate, fix or avoid struggle, but instead committed to living it as well as they could. I understand this as an essential part of the model of support in Intercordia. Student participants are told that they will struggle, that they will live through difficult times, that they will feel hopelessness and anguish, as this is a part of living with those experiencing poverty and structural violence. The call to participants is to work to live the experience in healthy ways navigating this with support and tools - mentorship, peer support, and self-care. There is not a move to individualize anguish. Outside pressures and realities are acknowledged alongside the need for the accepting of one's own embodied experience as part of the situation. There is a real danger here, that I identify, that the programming can be implemented as ableist, fitting into the larger critique of the international development field as not being inclusive of those who are unable to 'tough it out.' The larger criticism of social justice spaces as ableist (Zaikowski, 2016) is relevant here. There also exists a danger that Northerners with disabilities engaging in this experience can internalize this as a call as to overcome their impairment.

Kana, a mentor, explained that they re-read their journal from their experience in preparation for our interview. They realized how difficult their first few days in placement were. They described their reaction after they arrived in their overseas placement:

Usually my reaction when travelling is that after the first couple of days, actually usually the first couple of hours, I will have a breakdown. And that happened when I went. And it was one of my super vulnerable points. . . Recognizing that that is how I travel. It happens every time.

Kana explained that they understood this as a normal reaction to cultural adjustment, and wanting to share it with the student participants that they were supporting as an intentional move to reveal their own vulnerability and to create a space where student participants would feel comfortable sharing their own vulnerabilities. Kana talked about a moment of reading in their journal the following lines:

Didn't journal last night. Didn't want to be alone with my thoughts. And totally freaking out, right. So, um, being at least able to talk to somebody about it. Or just cry. And like, let something out, but not feel that weight of, of being isolated and alone.

Kana had a deep understanding of living in struggle as a subjective one - not a medicalized or pathologized objective one - and that they wanted to share it with student participants in order to normalize it. Kana did this as an invitation to them to feel what they are feeling and offer some suggestions of ways to respond and cope. Kana explained that their own experience opened them up to wanting to be with student participants in their low times. They revealed that they struggled with whether they should share the experience with the student participants, as they were there as a support them, unsure of how such deep vulnerability would be read or received. But they explained that they reflected on this and decided that they wanted to be vulnerable with them. I understand this as a real moment of disrupting ideas of vulnerability and who can and should be vulnerable in relations under Capital. Those who hold power and authority do not make known their vulnerability. Those imagined as a source of support do not make known their anxieties or times of struggle. Kana, the mentor, made an intentional choice to be vulnerable with those she was supporting, as a method of being a more effective and empathetic mentor. I understand this as a move to embody leadership in a different way, rooted in the Intercordia ethos of vulnerability enabling deeper relationship. When I asked Kana about a story of success, I heard more about their struggles with identifying as what one might see as successful in

relations under Capital. They said that looking back, they don't feel overly successful in their role as mentor, but is hopeful that the successes are there. For Kana, emotional success was important; the relationships that they helped mediate - culturally and language-wise - between hosts and student participants were moments of success. Kana named this as important labour they engaged in, work in engaging in the world otherwise, disrupting relations structured under Capital (Andreotti & DeSouza 2012).

Mutuality as Disruptive

Another theme I was interested in exploring with student participants was the invitation to entering into relationships of mutuality with the Southern *other*; what that looked like, how they understood this, and how this came into becoming. Mutuality is disruptive to the structuring of the Northern benevolent helper doing for the Southern *other* (Heron 2007, Jefferess 2001). In this reading, the imagined Northern helper is not present to make relationships of mutuality. Intercordia challenges this normative narrative, positing that relationships of mutuality are indeed possible across difference, but take work and a desire to engage with the *other* to work towards these relationships.

There were a number of interesting themes in the stories of mutuality forwarded by student participants. The stories were diverse and complex. They spoke to a desire to enter into different relationships with the *other*, ones not based in charity, caring, and not rooted in the humanitarian desire to help. Many of the stories were about the Southern *other* helping or assisting them in navigating the culture, society, work place or other spaces, which placed the *other* in a position of expert. Another revealing theme was that each student participant put forward a story about mutuality with a Southern *other*, and not with another Intercordian or Northerner. This sits in contrast to student narratives from mainstream IESL and GCE student narratives about relationship while in placement (Vrasti 2012; Zavitz & Butz 2011). Many of the stories included moments of vulnerability to get to the mutuality, affirming Vanier's (1998) assertion that vulnerability calls us deeper into mutual relationship. A number of times student participants would describe a mutual relationship as one that did not use spoken communication, but that there was a mutual desire to be together. There was a comfort in being together. This works to contextualize the vulnerability, which can be read as a response to the imagining of the South as chaotic and savage (Fanon 1961). The employment of vulnerability was met by the *other* who would call them to a relational mutuality. At times they struggled to explain how it was mutual,

which I read as not wanting to speak for the *other*, as the question necessitates, to some degree, one speaking for the *other*, imagining how the *other* felt the relationship as a mutual as well. The two main ways I heard mutuality employed as disruptive, was imagining mutuality as enabling agency and mutuality facilitated through vulnerability.

Mutuality as agency

When I asked Hunter, a student participant, about a relationship of mutuality in their placement, they told me this story; they were volunteering at a L'Arche workshop in their overseas placement and upon their arrival they were greeted by one of the community members with an intellectual disability - a core member (those without intellectual disabilities are assistants). As time passed they explained that this core member was helping them a lot in the day-to-day activities in the community. Hunter did not speak the language or have an understanding of the culture and routine in the workshop. This core member had embraced Hunter's newness and helped them adjust. They spent a lot of time together; they were bunkmates at a L'Arche retreat and partners in making lunch on their designated day in the workshop. Hunter explained this relationship as mutual because they "stuck together" and had "shared experiences." Hunter spoke fondly and gently about this relationship, their body language and tone of voice was animated and engaged. I understand this narrative on mutuality as a disruption to able-bodied helping narratives. Hunter explained that they relied on the help of the core member to navigate systems and realities that they could not navigate alone. The language used to describe the relationship was one of communion, a "mutual trust, mutual belonging; it is the to-and-fro movement of love between two people where each one gives and each one receives" (Vanier 1998: 28). There was value in the help that the student participant received. In this relationship the student participant imagined and related to the core member as a teacher, as one who could guide them through systems and social situations. Hunter was not an expert going to help the disabled Southern *other*, instead, Hunter revealed their ineptitude in a new culture, language, workspace and community, relying on the *other* to help and guide them. This may read as simplistic or reductive but this day-to-day learning, this radical shift in imagining one's self as not capable or in control, is a space for deep learning. Hunter revealed their understanding of the agency of the *other*, in this telling they disrupted the fantasy of Northern helper as expert. The Southern *other* was expert; the Northerner was the one needing help. I am not suggesting that this challenges relations under Capital in a material way, but that it

facilitated a space for imagining mutuality between bodies that are not culturally imagined as being in mutuality.

Mutuality as vulnerability

Another student participant, Carter, evoked the deep sense of vulnerability that they lived as integral in knowing a relationship with the *other* was mutual. Carter described the moment they knew a relationship was mutual as when they let down their defenses, and cried out of frustration and anger. In this moment they revealed their vulnerability. The community member responded by embracing Carter and comforting them. Carter explained that they remained in relationship through the highs and the lows, and neither one gave up. For Carter, this was mutuality. I understand this as an intervention into the normative narratives of the *other* as an object that impassively waits for help, joy and love from the Northern helpers. In this narrative, the *other* is valued as a subject, as engaged in the relationship. Another student participant, Reed, evoked similar emotions when they talked about their relationship with their host uncle, citing a time when they were upset and crying as a revealing of their shared mutuality. Reed explained that their host uncle had encountered them crying. The host uncle left the room and brought back a deck of cards, which Reed understood as a move to connect with them, or console them, in their time of desolation. Reed described this demonstration of support as a sign of the mutuality of their relationship. They expressed how grateful they were for this support, that it had significance, it was an important moment in their relationship. This was a small moment, but one that told Reed something about their value in the eyes of the *other*. I understand these two moments as telling in the imagining of the *other* as able to support Northerners emotionally as they struggle and are vulnerable. Mutuality is disruptive to the one-sided helping narrative. Further work needs to be done here on the role of Southern *other* as helper, as engaging in this emotional labour. Scholars engaged in this field in a critical way know the significant care work that Southern hosts engage in to facilitate these programs for students (see Heron 2015 for costs to hosts in engaging in this work). This area needs to be explored and made known, as it is fruitful ground for challenging image and subject of the Northern helper. I am especially interested in ties to notions of able-bodiedness, mental health, and disability in this place.

The pedagogical employment of vulnerability and mutuality serves as rich and deeply affective learning tool in the Intercordia model. Intercordia student participants

engaged in meaningful disruptions to normative narratives around helping, saving, disability, ableism, and who is imagined as vulnerable and who is not to be vulnerable in encounters and social relationships. Vulnerability allowed student participants to move into deeper learning about themselves and their understanding of the world and made openings for mutuality in relationships with the Southern *other*. I was most struck by the pedagogical potential of vulnerability as a way to imagine a freedom from normative and damaging narratives in IESL and GCE. This is hopeful and fertile ground for expanding and deepening this pedagogical invitation to Northerners engaging in this space.

Disrupting the Narrative of Disability as Individual

All of the student participants I interviewed were living in placements where disability was a focus of their volunteer work placement, or they lived with a host family member who had a disability, so I paid particular attention to when they did and did not take up disability, impairment and disablement in their narratives. In Chapter Two, I explored narratives of the participants who engaged in mainstream IESL and GCE volunteer work in organizations serving people with disabilities. These narratives were focused on individualized narratives of disability - helping, loving and caring for the disabled Southern *other*. The narratives from the Intercordia student participants were different. They were much more broad; they took up disability in complicated and diverse ways, embedding it in a structural and political analysis. This was hopeful and encouraging. I was moved by the depth of analysis and their willingness to share these moments of disruptive deep learning. In this section I take up four disruptive moments of learning that crack open previous already knowns or ways of being in the world, each moment relies on an analysis of disability as essential in this deep learning.

I was struck by the number of times that the student participants engaged in analysis of their own movement from understanding disability as individualized to a more robust social model analysis, with one participant engaging in a complex uncovering of their own ableism. In mainstream IESL and GCE program, the missing structural analysis can lead to the dangerous narratives of blaming hosts for inequities. Vrasti (2012) demonstrates this in her work with volunteer tourists in Guatemala, “Kristen already noted during her first week, San Andreseños did not seem to place any ‘cultural’ value on education” (p. 63). Often, when Northern student participants struggle with the lived inequities of global Capital they can individualize them as shortcomings of hosts. Anthropologist Benedicte Ingstad (2007)

highlights this tendency in her research in Botswana, explaining that the larger social and structural factors (access to healthcare, availability of caregivers) significantly impact the lives of people with disabilities in Botswana, shaping their lives in disabling ways. However, she explains that analysis from those assessing the problems of disablement, often sidestep these inequities and focus instead on individual shortcomings of caregivers, who are primarily women. The blame of a gendered inequitable system that produces disablement, is located in individual caregivers who are imagined as unable to attend to family members with disabilities. This is another aspect of the individualization of disability (Ingstad 2007). We see this same kind of analysis in the narratives from Northern student participants in Chapter Two; for example, Argentinians are unable to do the caring and loving of the disabled body and so Northerners must fulfill this role.

I want to forward an interesting intervention into this reproduction of the individualization of disability or poverty from a student participant explaining how they worked through a difficult moment while in placement. Parker was frustrated with what they felt was the monotonous day-to-day in a L'Arche workshop with people with intellectual disabilities. Parker explained that they felt like nothing ever changed, it was the same work, the same people, the same routines, and they had become increasingly angry and frustrated. They began to feel this anger and frustrated towards the Southern *others* living this day-to-day. Parker began to wonder why they too were not outraged, why they seemed to accept this monotonous life. Parker explains how they then moved into a deeper analysis, and their work to interrogate why they felt these feelings of anger and resentment;

It was at that point in time that I realized, that like, how much my culture and how much I, had started to value, like, like, pleasure. You know, like, pleasure in the form of yummy food, pleasure in the form of doing things that are fun and exciting- and, and whatever. And I kind of realized at that moment, that like everyone else was in a more peaceful place. Everyone was actually focused. And as cliché as it sounds, and dumb, but everyone was like focused on each other. People were focused on the dynamic of the room, and helping each other do simple things. And there just was this lack of self-focus that everyone else just naturally had. That, that I didn't. Like, I had this kind of egoism, and this self-focus that was really, that I was really struggling to break out of. Like, I even remember, trying to, like, right after workshop, I would be like, I'm going to get some ice cream! And I'm going to like, take a taxi home. Like, just these stupid things, like, I need that. It took a while to be like, oh - this is because I come from a culture where we have certain ideals and I need to break out of that. There was a lot of tension where I was trying to break free, of those tendencies.

I think seeing myself in that light was really hard. I was like, I am the type of person who, just like, can - you know - do what everyone else is doing. I don't need

things. Like, I am less ego-y than other people. Cause you are comparing yourself to other people. Then you are put in that context, and you are like, nope.

Here we see Parker struggling though how this was subjectively about them and their own value or ideas that they had ascribed to the situation. They reflected on their own class privilege as central in how they were judging or understanding the situation. They talked about their own ego and need to be perceived in certain ways, ways that they began to realize did not actually reflect their true self. They started to work through an anti-capital analysis, asking why material pleasures are understood as bringing affective pleasure, as they did not actually feel pleasure when engaged in these material pleasures. Parker remained faithful to a more self-reflexive and structural analysis, and rejected the easier narrative focused on individual shortcomings of the Southern *other*. Instead, they focused on their own attachments to constructed pleasures under Capital and interrogated what this meant and how they might move away from such tendencies. They engaged in difficult and complicated learning, putting class privilege at the centre, and not ascribing blame to the Southern *other*. Parker worked through their frustrations with monotony and their desires for material affective pleasure as a call to a more radical being with the *other*; a more attentive and present relationship that is focused on paying attention to the *other* and not the material pleasures that are about pleasing the self. Maybe this was a call to a more radical attention to crip time, to relating to time in a way that attends to the needs and ways of being of non-normative bodies (Kafer 2013). Parker demonstrates the movement from the emotionality of the self (Chouliaraki 2013) to being attentive to a different ontology, a different way of being present to *others*. Their frustration opened them to a deeper learning about relationality and how it is lived.

Another student participant, Jessie, described their movement from surface and uncomplicated understandings of the disabled Southern *other* to a broader, structural analysis of disablement. Jessie explained that when they arrived to their volunteer work placement they were taken aback by the frequent outbursts of emotion - often loud and read as disruptive - from the people with intellectual disabilities in the L'Arche workshop. They explained that initially they understood these outbursts as "a childlike irrationality," which could be explained as a result of a low IQ. This is an individualized, medicalized understanding, steeped in negative constructions of those with the label of intellectual disability as childlike and unsophisticated. Jessie described their movement to a more complex and critical understanding based in historical and social structures. They described

the process of learning the life histories of people, of beginning to notice patterns of where people might be triggered into anguish or frustration, of how the relationships at play complicated things. Jessie described moving to a place where they understood the outbursts as coming from deeper histories, and were unable to “chalk up signs of anguish to irrationality.” This anguish came from the pain that people had lived before moving to L’Arche, often living on the streets, experiencing significant violence and abuse, and had been deeply rejected by their families and society; disablement rooted in colonization, poverty and ableism. Jessie ended their reflection by explaining that they no longer understood disability through using a child metaphor. They explained that this began to uncover for them, the ways that society ascribes this label to those with intellectual disabilities. Jessie explained that their mother back home in Canada would often ask how the “kids at L’Arche” were doing, and when they walked through the neighbourhood people would often call out to them, calling them the person who worked at the “big kid daycare.” The student participant named a moment of success for them, as moving to a place that understood that this is a damaging construct, and that they had moved into recognizing the humanity of the *other*, no longer able to engage in these constructs. This deep learning is intimately tied to the critical pedagogy of L’Arche and Intercordia, inviting student participants to move into deeper relationship with those who have been marginalized as a way of understanding who they are beyond the labels that society has ascribed them, treating them as “unfortunates” or less than (Freire 1970, 54). Jessie supported people in the L’Arche workshop each day for three months, allowing for the time to learn the histories and stories of the core members. This time is essential in the shift in learning Jessie revealed. A shorter timeframe would not have allowed for this deeper engagement and the danger of a continued essentialization of difference (Tarc 2006) would have been great.

I now turn to a moment of difficult learning that demonstrates a deeper openness to challenging deeply held normativities. Jamie, a student participant, revealed that their experience with Intercordia challenged their deep investment in constructing themselves as a physically strong, capable and hard-working able-bodied woman. Jamie was volunteering in a placement that was rural and involved significant physical labour. She was often told she could not do things, that the labour was too difficult or hard and not for a woman to engage in. She explained that she took pleasure in the reactions from the Southern *other* in congratulating her on her physical strength and ability, that she was able to do work that was almost exclusively the domain of men. Jamie explained that through this process she began

to reflect on her attachment to her own self-worth as being defined by her physical strength, that she valued her physical ability, and enjoyed hearing that she was strong and capable. She dug into the self-reflexive work and explained that she asked herself what would happen if she was not strong? What if something happened to her physical ability? Would she still be valued? Jamie moved through this to ask how she values those with physical impairments, asking herself how she imagines and treats them. She explained that she wanted to think through how her own image and representation of herself as strong and able, works to perpetuate ableist language and ideals. When I asked Jamie what helped her to engage in this difficult learning, she explained that the encouragement to sit in the discomfort and not being in control, not being able to navigate things in the new culture due to language barriers and new systems and ways of doing things, prompted her to move into this space of learning and creating relationships in different ways. Jamie was the only one to explicitly engage in a complicated ableist analysis, how she identifies her own internalized ableism and ways she understood herself reproducing it.

I want to end this section with a story from a student participant that reminds us of how difficult and fraught this learning can be. Inviting students to stay in the uncomfortable space of asking themselves to be intentional in reminding themselves that they do not know the already known, is difficult counter-cultural work. Casey explained that in the last week of their experience in the host country they had an encounter that “made me rethink everything,” all of what they thought they knew and learned. Casey was volunteering in a school for students with disabilities, and had become friends with one high school student in particular. Casey explained that they felt that they were building a relationship together. Then on their last day in the school the friend was trying to tell them something using Sign language, but there was a miscommunication, so the friend wrote it out on a piece of paper (in Spanish). Casey still did not understand. The friend was puzzled, asking why they did not understand. Casey explained that they did not know Spanish perfectly, and that is why they could not understand. Casey explained, to me, that they thought they had a “mutual-ish understanding” of each other, that their lack of Spanish language was something they assumed the friend knew but that in that encounter they realized that the friend did not know Casey did not speak Spanish before arriving to the host country. Casey explained that this encounter made them “wonder if [they] knew at all what was going on.” They were moved to a space that left them open to challenge their own understanding of how they were engaging in these encounters. Casey described this movement as “understanding that I don’t

understand.” They explained this learning as one that is complex and complicated. I understand this radical positioning of the student participant as learner, as actively placing themselves in a space where they are open to knowing they don’t know, as one that is foundational to emancipatory and critical learning. This radical openness to letting the disabled Southern *other* teach you about your own need to unlearn, to enter the space of knowing that you do not know, even the already known. Casey did not express anger at revealing her own inability to know, but was open to this unstable position. This openness to placing oneself in the space of not understanding can be one that pushes Casey into a deeper, self-reflexive space that is open to the destabilization of Western modernity, the space of another global citizenship education can take place (Andreotti & deSouza 2012).

Disruption from the Southern *Other*

I was interested in understanding how participants responded to challenges or interventions from the Southern *other*, as it is one thing to accept theory and analysis in principle, but living it is messy and affective. Would participants be willing to enter into this difficult learning? How would they respond? How did they understand this challenge from the *other*? I used Barbara Heron’s (2007) work to introduce the question to student participants. She says: “An accountable bourgeois subject can be called to account, which means she (or he) seriously, if painfully, engages with critiques offered by the Other” (p. 155). I then asked for participants to tell me about a time when they were confronted in this way, about their privilege, about their role in systems of domination; race, ableism, or class. I asked them to describe this critique or confrontation, and whether it was overt or subvert. And then how they reacted; were they hurt or angry? I then asked whether they have thought or reflected on this since returning to Canada and whether they felt differently about the situation after time and reflection.

There were a diversity of perspectives on this, with some student participants moving through difficult self-reflexive work. Others were still struggling with the analysis of privilege in their experiences, not wanting to move to larger implications of privilege and what that might mean. Gada Mahrouse (2011) considers privilege in a small study with women engaged in ethical volunteer tourism. She found that while willing to engage in reflective work about privilege, they were unwilling or unable to question their access to mobility as privilege. In other words “they never questioned what they perceived as their right to be tourists” (p. 376). I encountered resistance in similar ways, with participants being not completely able to engage with the Southern *other*’s challenge to their presence in

their space, a space that is not their own, a space that has been colonized. I am interested in thinking through how it was harder for some to acknowledge that the challenge from the *other* might be something that even happens in their experience, as for them it meant that their relationships were somehow tainted or made less-than. Some student participants responded that they did not experience a challenge from the *other* in an outright way. This makes me wonder about ways we understand confrontation and what this might look like. When this refusal happened, I prompted them to reflect more on this, whether it might have happened in a more subversive way? Asking them to think back to a time when someone might have been trying to communicate something that they were not understanding at the time, but upon reflection maybe it was a gentle calling of them to account. For those who did reveal moments, the acceptance of this disruption from the Southern *other* was difficult for some participants to accept as a calling to account. I posit that this is prompted by the Intercordia framework of belonging, which imagines that all Southerners indeed want to welcome and live alongside Northerners. I heard a refusal to understand the effective encounters as taking place in capitalism, between different actors, meeting in a historical context that influences the encounter. The reality that these encounters take place between different actors in capitalism, complicated the desire for belonging on behalf of Northerners. Here I take up a number of reflections from student participants; three about their struggle with the challenge from the Southern *other*, one interpreted as being about their non-belonging, and two about how they worked to accept the challenge as one about their Northern positionality and class privilege.

Disruption as not belonging

Reed described their struggle with the fact that they were so visibly *othered* in the community. They told a story about a specific moment of this:

I had never been confronted with my own appearance and how that might come off to people. So, like, everywhere we walked, people were just point and scream. *Muzungu, Muzungu*. And they would run up and ask for money and stuff. And it was just such a, a strange moment. Because while I was there, I mean, I was broke. While I was there, so it was an interesting thing being in my, ummm, I was the most broke I had ever been in my life. I had no money. But people, based on my appearance, thought that I was wealthy. And, comparatively I am, to most of the people I interacted with, and. One really concrete example of this, was I was teaching an example to my grade 4 class. And one of my students, we were having a really nice conversation. Um, and off-topic he just kind of asked me did I have a note. And I didn't know what he meant. I didn't know. I was like, oh I don't know what you are talking about. And I still have the piece of paper of us cause he was signing it and I wasn't understanding what he was saying, so I have the piece of paper of us talking about it, and he keeps asking me for a note. And I don't

understand. So I, like, I am asking a passport? Or? And I, we never resolved the issue. And then I left, and I realized now that he was asking for, if I had any money. It just completely took me off guard, that that wasn't even in the realm of possibility for what one of my students would ask me about. Especially one that I was really close to. This was another student that I had a really good relationships with, he was really helpful, and talkative to me, and really embraced me as soon as I started teaching at the school. . . . It was very difficult actually, because I almost felt like I was making progress, and I was trying to relate to people and then at the end of the day, I just felt like I was being identified by my colour, which is something that people go through all the time, and I understood that, but it was just the first time that I had to face it.

Me: Had to live it?

Student: I had to live it, yeah.

Reed understood the *other* engaging in the confrontation of their privilege as a disruption of their shared conversation, their moment of connection. It was uncomfortable for Reed. When I asked if this made them angry, or frustrated, or what their emotions were at this moment, Reed explained that they were frustrated. Explaining that their desire was to be vulnerable, to be human with others in the community, and that they desired an equal playing field. But these interactions reminded Reed that this was never going to happen, “that there was always going to be some power dynamic in our relationship and that couldn't be ignored.” They were shocked that this intrusion, of the acknowledgement of privilege, and that the asking for money would come into the space of the school, and by extension, their experience. Reed explained that this discomfort with the acknowledgement or display of privilege continued after they returned home to Canada. They would Skype with their host family, their privilege on full display on the computer screen as their home or cottage would be visible in the background. Reed said that this made them feel uneasy and guilty, using the word “nerve-wracking” to describe it. This discomfort with their privilege, their desire for an equal playing field, of a place to belong and be with, and their imagining of the Southern *other* as the disruptor, is one of the dangers of the specific invitation to enter into relationships of mutuality that Intercordia forwards. Reed read this invitation as one that would make space for an equal playing field, which is a dangerous fantasy that erases histories and power structures. The student participant became frustrated when this imagined space did not exist. This also sits within the larger de-politicized climate of IESL, where much of the economic processes are hidden, for example the paying of host families for hosting the Northerner.

A mentor, Jordan, reflected on an intense reflection session they facilitated with student participants in their placement. Jordan explained that the student participants were struggling with being called out on their whiteness in the small village they were living in. This is a common perceived ‘struggle’ for white students in placement. In some countries in Africa, the term *muzungu* is often used to refer to white foreigners, the construct of white being broad in nature, and the majority the Intercordians fall into this category. Jordan explained that the student participants were quite frustrated at what they understood as being singled out, called out for their whiteness; their outsider status, their un-belonging being named. At the formal reflection sessions together, student participants often turned to this topic, and engaged in venting their frustrations. Jordan explained that they struggled to respond to their frustration. Jordan explained that they decided to use a story of a close friend in Canada who has an intellectual disability to work through the issue with the student participants;

I shared a story about people with disabilities in Toronto. And how those individuals are citizens of Toronto. They.. Their . . . they look Canadian. They are from Toronto. But they always get looked at on the street. And I really specifically talked about an individual that I lived with in my L’Arche community and how, how much this bothers her. That she is 55 and still gets looked at every single day on the street. And she hates it. She hates being looked at. And she stares down people when they look at her she gets really grumpy. Um, but this is her life, this is her country, and so she lives in her own country with a disability and gets looked at and gets called out because she has a disability. Um, because she’s different. And so, um, that, I remember like sharing that story about belonging and how you can live in your own country and not feel like you belong because you are different, you have a disability. And we talked about disability in Rwanda, but also how we are different here.

After this reflection session, Jordan described the feeling in the group as changing, as the student participants being more open to thinking through the issue in a deeper way. But that it still remained difficult. I want to think about this pedagogical moment as one of disruption; of using disability to talk to belonging, to disrupt the student participant’s conception of being called out on their whiteness as racism, using ableism as a way to highlight who is valued and how that makes one feel like they belong or do not belong. Jordan asked participants to engage in an intersectional analysis, asking them to imagine and think through the ways in which societal constructions shape and determine the lives of those deemed less valued or as able to belong. This challenge to enter this intersectional space of difficult learning was met with a tepid response from student participants, revealing an openness to this difficult learning, but also the difficult and long process of counter-

cultural learning that challenges our deeply held beliefs around normativities, whiteness and privilege.

Another student participant, Parker, talked through a time when someone unknown to them confronted them on whether they had learned the local language in their time living in the country. When Parker revealed that they had not learned much, the person began to yell angrily at them. Parker explained this response as rude, and explained that they were comforted by the others around them. Parker explained that they felt frustrated, that it was not their fault they didn't learn more of the language. They acknowledged that the man had a point, but that it was upsetting. This reveals a moment when the Northern participant is called out on their privilege, their ability to move into a foreign space and not need to learn the language as their whiteness and privilege is valued enough that this learning is not necessary. Simply their presence is enough. Their privilege means they can continue to speak English and others around them will attempt to understand, and make them feel welcome. Parker acknowledged this, but was angry and frustrated at this confrontation, using the word 'rude' to explain the person confronting their behaviour, and not as a moment to really think through what it means to move into a space and not learn the local language, as a marker of privilege and how others experience this. There was an acknowledgement of the confronter being right, but the frustration with the method he chose to communicate the critique was the focus. Parker felt signalled out for their non-belonging. They sought the comfort of those around them that reassured them of their belonging. This encounter did not open a space to move more deeply into the critique and self-reflexive unpacking of privilege.

These three moments speak to the danger of the focus on relationships, on being with the *other*, as a site for radical change. Student participants experienced the Southern *other* calling them *muzungu* as a constant pointing out of their difference in the small communities they were living in. Because of the framing of Intercordia, with its emphasis on being with, and making mutual relationships, the participants understood the label of *muzungu* as an interruption of this process of being with. They experienced the calling out of their difference as a negative intrusion to the process of belonging. They were frustrated, and expressed that they felt that their desire to have an equal relationship could not happen because of these interventions of being called out based on their race and privilege. Parker felt similar. They felt called out for their inability to speak the local language, which is a

marker of privilege. The imagining that we are all vulnerable and broken, that we can enter into relationship with marginalized others through that mutuality of vulnerability, can lead students to learning that erases privilege, whiteness and colonial realities. It can act to erase colonial and inequitable processes and systems that render certain bodies vulnerable or violated. The Southern *other* becomes the disruptor when they acknowledge the material and historical conditions that structure these encounters. This is a tension that cannot be reconciled, it is intimately embedded in these encounters, and only deep and committed critical pedagogy and learning can work at making this known to students, but never reconciled or made better. The role of a trained mentor in anti-oppression and anti-racism pedagogies of support is essential here.

Privilege as disruption

Some student participants worked to accept a challenge from the Southern *other* as being about their own positionality and privilege. Taylor described a moment with their host mother when they were asked to really think through their privilege. While talking with their host mother about how the participant had worked to save money to pay for the Intercordia program, as opposed to it being paid for by their parents, the host mother asked about what minimum wage was in Canada. When Taylor told her, it became apparent that minimum wage in Canada was what her host brother, a professional, earned as his salary in the host country. Taylor took this as a moment to work through what privilege entails; explaining that their host brother would never be able to travel to Canada, despite that he worked just as hard as them. It wasn't about hard work, it was about privilege and opportunity for some and not for others. Taylor explained that they understood the confrontation from their host mother as one where she revealed the information and asked Taylor to process it, to think it through. Taylor understood this as an invitation to think through their own class privilege. They were open to this confrontation, to listening to what it means to live with privilege, as explained by someone who does not live with it. Taylor was willing to engage in this difficult learning, moving past simplistic ideas of privilege being only about having access to money. The delivery of the challenge most likely impacted the way that Taylor accepted it. Taylor explained that their host mother engaged in this challenge by revealing the information and allowing Taylor to think it through.

Another student participant, Casey, described an interesting and raw conversation they had with their younger host brother. They explained that throughout their time in placement they were always joking with their teenage host brother that he would come to Canada one

day and try maple syrup. It was an ongoing thing they shared, and looking back, Casey realized the implications of such a joke that drew attention to the privilege they held and the ways in which the host brother would never have that privilege. Reflecting on this, Casey realized the joke was insensitive and inappropriate. Near the end of their stay in the country, Casey asked the host brother to promise to visit them in Canada. He was angered by this comment, and responded that he would never be able to go to Canada. Casey explained that they had said it in jest, a continuation of the ongoing joke, but realized it was not a joke to the host brother. Casey explained;

He said it super simply, like pretty much he said . . . we're poor people. And like, we will always be poor. I don't know if he said, it was meaning like, I'll always live in this house, or like, I'll always live here. Like, I'll always be here. Like, in the future you have to come if you want to see us. Like, we will never come to Canada. It was just, like, it was like, he was like, I'm tired of the joke. And like, I think it was like . . . "yeah you can joke about this coming to visit, but that's reality that could happen, but, like I will never, ever be able to come to Canada to come and see you.

So what Casey thought was a fun way of envisioning the future, the host brother used to draw attention to the realities of privilege and that certain bodies from certain spaces are not able to engage in things like international travel, the very experience that the Northern participant was able to engage in. This interruption to the joking and fun was significant for Casey, and they engaged in good processing of what this means in their relationship instead of responding with possible fantasy resolutions, for example, offering to sponsor the host brother to come to Canada, or insisting on the possibility of a visit. Casey, like their host brother, made room for this reality in their relationship, as one that is necessarily intimately embedded in these particular relationships across difference. The Southern *other*, the host brother, called the participant to the inequitable reality of global politics, of the reality of borders and which bodies can, and which bodies cannot, cross out of the imagined borderlands in the metropole, which are policed and managed through various structural adjustment policies, aid, and restriction of movement (Duffield 2001). There was no resolution, no fantasy that this might change, just the reality that their relationship was one that included this unjust inequity. This was a powerful narrative on listening to the confrontation from the Southern *other*, one that reveals the power of difficult learning and being open to the possibilities of the *other* as teacher and of the Northerner being called to account, and responding to that call.

Uncertain subjectivities

I end with the final theme of uncertainty and anxiety, which is a nod to the unsettledness that characterized participant's reflections on their learning in the program. I think this speaks to the unstableness of difficult learning. They expressed anxiety about ways they lived certain moments in placement, unsure of whether they lived certain experiences well or respectfully. Then, I take up the theme of global citizenship. Student participants did not undergo a movement to claiming a subjectivity of global citizen; instead, like Nadine Dolby (2007), their learning prompted them to interrogate this constructed subjectivity. They revealed uncertainly about engaging in the Intercordia program to further their own education about the world and Southern *others*, and struggled with what change they can or should engage in; what it might look like and what it should look like. The future was made more unclear or unstable through this uncertainty, which can be imagined as a radical opening for new possibilities.

Anxiousness in their learning

Many of the student participants were cautious and almost anxious about navigating the complexity of what they lived and ways they were reflecting on it. With the exception of two participants, all were very open about their anxieties about ways they lived particular moments or about the larger ethical issues in engaging in the South. This revealing of anxiousness is disruptive to the normative truths of Northerner as expert, helper, or saviour, and makes room for anxiety to create a space for new ways of understanding, and new possibilities (Salih & Butler 2004: 333). Here I imagine anxiousness as a tool to enable deeper learning. Things were not sure; things were not binary; things were unstable, which can lead to the yet imagined possible. A verbalized anxiety that I often heard from student participants was the sentiment *I am not sure if I should think about it like this*. I heard this as an uncertainty about what was ethically or morally right in certain encounters, in their role in what they lived, and the overall anxiety about engaging in an experience that is so fraught with inequity. Anxiety was something that they used as a tool for navigation. Staying in the anxiousness was a way to remain open to the difficult learning. I sometimes worked through these encounters with them, processing their reactions and anxiety by asking them to think about what it means to stay in this anxiety or uncertainty. The willingness to stay in the anxiety, in the unsure, in the complex, was a theme I identified in the responses from student participants. At times, this embodied anxiousness can be read as a space that opened them up to deeper learning, more complex learning that valued different ontologies.

One participant, Reed, explained a conflict they lived with the Director of the organization where they were volunteering:

I went to him one day and said that I was kind of nervous being a teacher, I had never taught before. And I needed some guidance on what to teach them. And I'll never forget it. He said it doesn't matter what you teach them, they are not going to get it anyways. Something along those lines. And I was just, I could tell he couldn't see the value and the potential in them as much as they saw in the hearing kids. It was really explicit in how they divided their donations and whatnot. I mean, the hearing school was being built up, and was beautiful and had all high end features. Whereas the Deaf school was mud floors, really falling apart buildings and it was just really evident. And I thought going into it that I was going into an organization that equally prioritized their subsections. And then when I got there I found out that was not true. Or at least my perception was that it wasn't true.

Reed explained their differences as ideological, that Deaf culture was not valued by the director. This was difficult for the Reed, who positioned themselves as coming from a progressive and rights-based approach to disability; they expected the same from a not-for-profit in the Global South. I asked Reed how they lived through this conflict, how they processed it and moved on in their work there. They explained that they did not allow these constructions of disability to influence them, and that they intentionally tried to be differently with the students. This conflict was something they are still living deeply, saying that they still think about it often, reflecting on whether they lived it well, unsure of how to have engaged differently, or if they could have done anything differently. We returned to this situation later in the interview, when I asked about whether they thought that they had an imperative to enact change after living an experience like this. Reed returned to the construction of disability in the country, as those with disabilities constructed as unintelligent, or unworthy, resulting in horrific violence to people with disabilities, with family's hiding or killing family members with disabilities.

I still don't know how to understand it. It, just you realize how far disability rights have come here [Canada]. And it's just a complicated issue, because you can't really force a country. It's hard, cause how do you influence a country to change their ideologies? Without being colonial? Or without imposing your cultural values on other people? It's like, at what line is it culture, and that at what line is it just a violation of human rights. I think that was the biggest struggle for me. And I never voiced my opinion really on it while I was there.

When I asked Reed to reflect on how they lived this, on whether they wished they had engaged differently, they explained, "It's a moment of regret, but it's also a moment that I don't know if I would be able to change." Reed talked through the complications of the lived situation; the Director was their boss, they were to work together for the next three

months, this was their school and their country, and Reed was a guest, an outsider. They questioned what saying something critical in that moment with the Director would have done. There was no resolution, there was no redeeming narrative, just the consistent anxiety that the situation is fraught with ethical and moral issues, bigger structures and discourses that shaped this one encounter, and just the commitment to stay in this difficult space of learning.

Another participant, Carter, struggled through the invitation of Intercordia to be with the *other* and not do for the *other*. In their overseas placement there were volunteers from other countries, coming from organizations with very different missions and ideas about entering the South and their role in the host organization. Carter explained that this was difficult as the other international volunteers were engaging in concrete work, such as animating first aid workshops. This moved them to wonder whether they too should be engaged in such concrete work, work deemed as beneficial to the host organization. There was a conflict in trying to live the commitment to being with the *other*, when others were doing for the *other* in the same space. Carter explained a moment of real discomfort as when the Director of the host organization asked them to write a newsletter. Carter explained to me that they felt hesitant to tell the story of the organization and its people, that they did not understand this to be their role, that it was not morally right for them to engage in the creation of a representation of the host organization. They struggled, working through the newsletter, and in the end they never finished it. Looking back, Carter described their discomfort with this unfinished work. This was not a case of just not finishing work because they were lazy or uninterested (Vrasti 2012). There was a real moral and ethical element to why they did not want to engage in this particular work, leaving them unable to complete the project. This moment speaks to the difficulty of engaging in counter-cultural work in a space that is accustomed to receiving international volunteers in a specific way. Indeed with the dominant goal as the self-development of the subject from the North, “[l]ocals’ understandings of their own needs are necessarily secondary” (Zavitz & Butz 2011: 418).

The Director of the host organization asked the student participant to engage in work that other international volunteers would usually complete, but because of the student participant’s moral discomfort with engaging in representation making of the local organization, they did not complete the work. Carter explained that they did not engage in a discussion about their ethical concerns to the Director. They just left the project unfinished.

This participant was engaged in difficult self-reflexive learning about who should tell the stories and represent those in the South, but the result for the host organization was most likely one of frustration at the unfinished work assigned. If both student participants, Reed and Carter, had engaged in complicated and uncomfortable conversations with the Director in both situations, what might have been the resulting exchange? Would the difficult learning have been mutual? What possibilities could have been born? Could the mentor serve an important pedagogical role here? To open a space where these difficult discussions can be had, that lead to a more authentic ‘reading of the world’ (Freire, 1970: p. 8)? Both are complex and difficult situations to navigate, which provoked anxiety and uncertainty in the student participants. This anxiety pushed them into critical thinking about their presence as Northerner, but it did not push them into engaging with the Southern *other* in a mutuality of working through the difficult learning.

Shifts in understanding

I asked student participants to reflect on the identity of global citizenship. I was interested to understand whether it was something that inspired or compelled them to enter the Intercordia program. None of the participants claimed this as motivation to enter the Intercordia program, and only one participant, Mackenzie, identified personally with the term, explaining that they aspired to be a global citizen. Overall, their reflections had really interesting interventions into the global citizen subjectivity. They explained that engaging in the Intercordia program, living in a Southern country in this specific way worked to, instead of strengthening the identity of being a global citizen, make known how intimately national citizenship (in this case Canadian) is integral to who is valued, who has rights, who is enabled and who is disabled and how both work to constitute the other. Karen Pashby (2012) explains that, “there is a presumption in the concept of ‘global citizenship’ that there exists a global community to which we can all belong and in which all can participate. Yet citizenship itself is defined by who does and does not belong” (p. 17). The process of living with Southern *others* did not propel student participants to engage in claiming the subjectivity of global citizen, but instead challenge its essential validity as citizenship is so intimately and materially tied to the concept of the state (Dolby 2007). The narratives on global citizenship I heard from student participants were critical and non-conforming, diving into deep critiques of privilege and the uses of the contested identity as serving Capital and as ways to remain innocent in an inequitable world where one’s privilege is directly

implicated in violence and oppression. This was hopeful and fertile ground, revealing disruptive and difficult learning.

Bo, a student participant, explained that their Intercordia experience worked to reinforce their national identity as Canadian, and not the identity of a global citizen,

I think it can be an uncritical way of blanketing your own privilege, or your own uh, racial dynamics . . . I can go to Africa and work and I'm a global citizen . . . so I think the more I realize a, that I am so closely affiliated to my own nationality, but also the way people take me. Like, I go to the [global South] and I will never be [Southern]. Like, I will never be [Southern]. This, like blanket term of a global citizen, I think is, can be a cop out for people not wanting to take responsibility for the privilege that their nationality gives them.

Here, Bo is making known the implications of place and where one is a citizen of, as integral to one's rights and privilege (Pashby 2012). They are calling attention to the reality that it matters where you hold citizenship and that covering up constructed realities with the all-encompassing label of global citizen is a way to erase the inequity and violence of privilege. Bo echoes Charania's (2011) assertion that "[t]he materiality of borders, passports and access to means and travel that give rise to claims of a global are specific relations of power, embedded in national frameworks that can not be denied or elided" (p. 355-6).

Bo went on to struggle through which bodies are deemed or labeled as global citizens, something that Jefferess makes known (2012). They asked,

A Palestinian can be a part of the PLO and these liberation movements, across the world, and you know, like, they have solidarity connections with, or they are connected to liberation movements in Vietnam, and stuff like that. So, how am I more of a global citizen then them? Than someone my age in Palestine, you know . . . It's a trend in the Global North to, kind of, read an article, and be like, oh, did you hear this is going on here. This Canadian mining company is doing that. Sure, you can know about that, and it can kind of make you globally aware. Um, whereas, someone, like, an indigenous person in Ecuador, or something, like, might not have those capacities- or avenues of learning available to them, but, like what I think is, like, they are so much more involved in, per say, because they are involved in indigenous sovereignty and the global movements going on. And in that respect, how they might have solidarity with indigenous peoples in Colombia or Brazil, or something like that.

Here Bo's analysis echoes Jefferess' (2012) critique of whose bodies are labeled with the privileged global citizen term, and whose bodies are not. Jefferess (in Andreotti et al. 2010) explains that we are uniquely positioned to imagine a different world because of our positionality as Canadians. Bo echoes this with their questioning of why we are

imagined as global citizens after taking a course with that name, when Southern *others* engaged in liberation struggles, connected to a vast network of Southern actors acting globally, are not deemed global citizens. Bo engaged in a shift in understanding of citizenship, digging into the deeply privileged nature of the term global citizen, understanding that their positionality, not a lived and engaged experience and commitment to solidarity and internationalism, enabled this access.

Jamie explained that the concept of national citizenship became more evident than ever throughout their experience. They explained that now, more than ever, they cannot separate themselves from being from Canada and from a specific region and town. They explained that it is difficult for them to think on a global level, that their dreams and aspirations are local and are tied to the local reality of the part of Canada in which they live. The focus on relationship at the heart of Intercordia prompted Jamie to hear their call as one to the people who they belong to, and not to do for, or develop, those in other countries but to put roots in their own community, to work with their own people.

Gada Mahrouse's (2011) work takes up the ways in which ethical volunteer tourism can disrupt or reproduce racialized power relations. She found, in a small study of female ethical volunteer tourists, that while they were willing to engage in questions about privilege, their "discourses of reversal and equation provided the tourists with a means to reconcile the inequity they are participating, and being complicit, in" (p. 376). I find this a fascinating area to think about, one that I am embedded and entangled in, and do not see an ethical way to resolve. Is it acceptable to engage in these encounters, while knowing that it is reproducing inequity? Does it always reproduce inequity? I asked student participants what they thought about engaging in this type of experience as one just about their own critical learning about the world? Was this something they thought was morally or ethically just? Or did they think there is an imperative to also enact critical change after the experience - whether in yourself, in your community, or in the world? In other words, I wanted to explore with them whether they thought it is ethically right to engage in a program like Intercordia and not enact changes in ways that you think will engage with the issues of injustice they identified while in placement. Gulzar Charania (2011) reveals that "many of us [in global or international studies of social justice], are channelled into a particular set of practices in order to respond to oppression" (p. 362). IESL and GCE entails a certain set of practices that respond to oppression, one being that it is acceptable for the

Northerner to enter the South to learn about this oppression. The responses from student participants here were interventions into these beliefs in a particular set of practices, complicating what it means to enter this space in this way.

I heard a diversity of responses that I was surprised by, with participants unpacking the question in a variety of ways. What was universally shared was their commitment to thinking this through in a complex way. It was clear that change for them meant change beginning *with* them. This echoes Vanier's call to change one's own heart as a way of making change in the world, to form authentic mutual relationships as a way of working towards peace (Vanier 2015). Intercordia's invitation is to Northerners to challenge the ways they understand the world, not to change the world. It is about not being sure or clear in one's own knowledge, the constant openness to self-reflexivity in our learning about the world. Has there been a shift in accountability for student participants? Were there moments of this that revealed themselves in our interviews? One student participant, Bo, explained that they struggled upon returning to Canada with the fact that they used other people as a means to their own learning. The semester after the Intercordia program they took a course on Kantian ethics, and they explained that this helped them think through this difficult ethical reality,

I struggled with the idea of me treating the people who I lived with in the community I was in, as a means to an end of me learning about, uh, these issues and people in [the South] and . . . the personal development that came from it. . . Martha Nussbaum, writes really well on instrumentalization and I focused on that. And she allows for content to redeem an objectifying relationship. Where prior to that Kant was just like, no, you are treating them as a means to an end, that that was wrong. That's kind of where I was at, I was like, this is not very good. What can I do to make this better? And realizing that agency of the people accepting the Intercordians, is really neat. That they want to allow this type of learning experience to happen is a part of their internal decision making process, and their ability to be an agent in that relationship. Um, and just, like, coming to that realization was really, um, really great for me. It helped me, like, like my guilt of privilege is there . . .but it was. . . invigorating to think about uh, my host family . . . as people who could decide for themselves.

Bo's reflection interrogates their investment in, and practice of, their IESL experience and how it affects those in the South who were integral to that experience. Another student participant, Casey, spoke to how difficult this question has been for them, stating that they feel fortunate to have engaged in the experience, that it is fundamental to who they are, but that they feel a lot of guilt for how much they gained in comparison to what the host family and community gained, asking "what did they gain from this experience?" Casey explained that they returned with a deep desire to make change in tangible ways, but how? Should

they? It is complicated, and they expressed that they are still not sure. They described living a time of four months of real difficulty and anxiousness, one they named as a time of ‘darkness’ upon return to Canada, a time of confusion and not knowing how to make sense of things and how to move forward. This highlights the difficult nature of this space, and the real danger that without support and community this learning does not lead to new possibilities. Instead, it leads to a closing up or a shutting down and a retreat for Northerners. Unable to discern a healthy path forward, one shuts down and the opening for possibility, the imagining of the new, is closed.

The theme of what change might or could look like was diverse and uncertain; it was not prescriptive or sure. I heard many different ways that student participants understood change after their experience. Reed explained that they learned that change wouldn’t look the way you might imagine it before you go abroad. Jamie was firm in their affirmation, that yes, one has an imperative to act, stating that “with knowledge comes responsibility,” and evoked their Northern privilege in their answer by saying that if one has access to this type of experience and knowledge, then one needs to engage in action upon return home, as a responsibility of that privilege. Jamie went on to explain that there is no prescription for action, but that the movement must be towards justice. A number of student participants evoked the imperative to change as located here in Canada, and not as change that needed to happen in the South. They gave their own lived examples of working with immigrants marginalized by our system, or entering into relationship with someone who is lonely or isolated here in Canada. For one student participant, Taylor, it was making small changes by asking critical questions, informing others about the injustices they saw while abroad, as working towards the bigger systemic change needed. Taylor evoked Adichie’s *Danger of the Single Story* (2009), explaining that they now felt a responsibility to challenge this single story of poverty that the North constructs, with the complex stories they witnessed and experienced while in the South. They felt the responsibility to counter simplistic and disabling narratives with complex ones that include critical analysis of power and structures.

Gulzar Charania (2011) employs an excerpt from Memmi to interrogate the ways in which the privileged have an imperative to act. “In the preface to *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Albert Memmi poses the following question, “I had to ask myself if I would have condemned colonization so vigorously if I had actually benefited from it myself. I hope so.” She goes on to state, “We do benefit, the question is, do we object and if so, do we

do so in ways that do not reinscribe imperialist impulses and relations?” (p. 367). I forward this final reflection from a student participant, Parker, as a response to what these ways might look like;

I remember coming home to my family and I felt like everyone was just so much more fractured from each other. Like, I started to see from a new lens, like because when I was with my host family, like, all my siblings were always kind of like, all over each other and like, whatever. And, I came back home and I understood, like, wow - we really keep our space from each other. And, then I'm like - why do we do that? And, well, we are not able to be vulnerable with each other. When we have things that we don't share. And, like, Ok, I should help work for this, I should try and (muffled), and I can't speak from, like, a social justice systemic kind way of changing things, cause I am, just, not educated enough in that. Um, but I think, like, I tried to continue to be my most vulnerable self. Which, I think that that did have positive repercussions. Like, I think of even just, like, small things. Like, my brother was the first to come out to me.

Change, for Parker, was deep and challenges oppressive and marginalizing impulses and relations. It is not subscribing to normative narratives. It is not based in grandiose ideas of global citizenship and changing the world, it was loving differently in their own geographical space, allowing others to live and love in more accepting and loving ways. I posit that this is the radicalness that Intercordia is calling Northerners to, one that is steeped in Freire's (1970) call to make a world where it is easier to love.

Irreconcilable Tensions of IESL and GCE Learning in Neoliberal Times

Madeline Burghardt (2016) takes up the critique of L'Arche as a model that facilitates the framing of people with disabilities as the tools for the personal growth and transformation of the non-disabled who come to live and share life with them. The “disabled figure is needed, not as an agent of positive social change, nor as the author of her own destiny, but as an accomplice in the more important project of the true (non-disabled) subject's self-actualization” (2016: n.p). This is something that directly speaks to Intercordia and a criticism that deeply characterizes the field of IESL and GCE. Burghardt asks whether these tropes or metaphors have deep significance given the way L'Arche lives just and reciprocal relationships in the day to day? Does this intentionality and commitment redeem the deeply troubling ethical position? I posed this question to returning students in an Intercordia re-integration class I taught; What does it mean that their (our) learning is about the poverty experienced by the Southern *other*? The students were visibly uncomfortable, and one voiced confusion about what the question meant. We see the discomfort of this disruptive learning, the challenging of the deeply held normative truths of IESL and GCE.

Another example of this is when Intercordia participants engage in an exercise in the preparatory formation seminars where they are asked to think about the host families that they will be living with. They are asked to fill out a questionnaire, developed by one of Intercordia's international partners, asking them a series of questions about who they are, their likes and dislikes. This allows the host organizations to place them with a family where both sides of the relationship, host and student, will live together well. Students often desire to live an extreme situation of difference, and this can take on the shape of extreme material conditions, asking for the most basic of built environments: no indoor bathroom, dirt floors or no electricity. The imagined 'true' poverty. Their intentions are to live with those most marginalized by global capitalism and inequality, to learn from them what this means, but it is a perverse desire as it relies on the poverty of others for the learning and growth of the Northern student. What does it mean to want to not have access to running water for three months, knowing you will go home to access to it again and those you lived with will stay in this reality? What does it mean to desire to live in conditions created by disabling policies and conditions that produce impairment? What does it mean to make these as choices for our own learning, when those we will be living with do not have the choice to leave these conditions? These are weighty ethical issues that cannot be resolved or reconciled, as they are an intimate part of these experience, but must be struggled with in the space of IESL and GCE. To varying degrees, the marginalized Southern *other* and their material conditions serve as a tool for the learning and growth of the Northern student. This cannot be reconciled, but it can be intimately brought into the learning and included as essential questions and conversations as a basis for encounters under IESL.

Intercordia is steeped in Vanier's (1998) ideas around the journey to becoming human, which relies on an essential premise that there is choice to engage in a journey of becoming more human, or more fully human. This necessitates a position from which one's humanity is not in effect questioned; the starting point is that one is human and able to move into a position of being more fully human. This erases or denies particular subjectivity to those who are oppressed and dehumanized; the disabled Southern *other*. The choice of Northerners to engage in the self-reflexive work of becoming more fully human, highlights the privilege of having the *choice* of becoming more fully human. How is the disabled *other* used in instrumental ways to constitute the ablebodiedness of Northerners? The reasons why students are drawn to IESL and GCE - to engage in authentic experiences of community, belonging, to learn about inequity and poverty - stem from their experience of feeling less

than human in a dehumanizing system of Capital. The same system that denies the humanity of the disabled *other*. How can this be brought in as a part of the learning? It is not something that can be solved or made better, only made known and engaged with in critical and complicated ways. In thinking this through, I think it could be helpful to engage with real-world intersectional examples like the racist responses to the Black Lives Matter movement. Black Lives Matter (BLM) was founded is “an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise” (Black Lives Matter 2017). The All Lives Matter response to the BLM movement is rooted in historical inaccuracy; the humanity and lives of all bodies is not denied, erased or murdered. It is only some lives that are deemed less than human. Only some lives/bodies need the public affirmation that they matter, as others have always mattered, their humanity was never in question. Intercordia needs to do intentional preparation work here, deconstructing the becoming human narrative with participants.

Vanier’s *Becoming Human* (1998), a CBC Massey Lecture and accessible book written for a secular audience, is taken up in the Intercordia formation with student participants. The ideas from *Becoming Human* infuse the Intercordia program, starting with the premise that by entering into relationships of mutuality across difference, we are working towards an authentic personal and collective emancipation. One of Intercordia’s main tenets, indeed the essential invitation to Northern University students on entering into the encounter, is to do so with the ethos of being *with* and not doing *for*. This necessitates a movement from a place of knowing what the Southern *other* needs, from the identity of the Northern helper or humanitarian, to the place where the Northern student is there to learn and understand *alongside* the Southern *other*. The danger here is that student participants, who want to engage in the radicalness of this statement, can understand this as the erasure of the colonial reality of the encounter; the raced, classed and disabled reality of the encounter. Participants can engage in reductive thinking: we are all the same, we are all weak and broken. This can move student learning towards the erasure of the ways in which some *others* are othered by the ways Capital has structured the world system. We cannot escape our privilege, it goes beyond wealth or material things, it is the rights and value associated with our passport, the geographical space we inhabit, and the ways in which the metropole has been constructed as superior and progressive, entitled to intervene in the borderlands (Duffield 2001).

Intercordia's pedagogical focus on vulnerability, rooted in Vanier's thinking in this area, where vulnerability is a universal experience and one that can call us to deeper relationships of mutuality, becomes a site where Northerners risk engaging in inaccurate or damaging learning. The risk becomes a learning that my vulnerability (shrouded or protected by privilege) is equal to your vulnerability as an oppressed or marginalized *other*. This is not historically or materially correct and it can operate as a way to erase historical, colonial, and material oppression. It can erase or make little, white Northern privilege and systems of domination and oppression. The concern is that the learning becomes, we are both vulnerable, we both suffer, and therefore, we are equal. The emancipatory potential of Intercordia's forwarding of vulnerability as the basis for the encounter with the *other* is learning that says: my own vulnerability has opened me up to accepting you, the *other*, as teacher, as knowledge-holder, as agent in your emancipation however you imagine and work towards that. My vulnerability has allowed me to occupy a critical, self-reflexive space that opens me up to processing and accepting my own role in your oppression. For undergraduate students from the North, this space is a difficult one to fully embrace or enter, and the pull to enter the first space of learning is strong because it is comforting.

Intercordia's invitation to be with and not do for, created as an alternative to the mainstream IESL and GCE helping narratives, inevitably still makes space for the reproduction of the Southern *other* as unfortunate and in need of help. David Jefferess (2013) is helpful here in his critique of the 'Radi-Aid' satirical song, which was released as a critique of the white saviour complex in Africa, asking tongue-in-cheek for those in Africa to send radiators to the poor cold folks of Norway. Jefferess explains that the purported aim of the project, to critique the development agency aid complex, is subverted by its unintended reinforcement of the idea that the North should help the South. It still works to reinforce the humanitarian impetus of the relationship, saying "the anxious repetition of these images reinforces the idea – as already known – that we, the fortunate, have a moral obligation to aid them, who are unfortunate" (p. 75). Heron's (2007) work is helpful here, explaining that the focus on collaboration can obscure power relations. Northern University students engage in Intercordia through these narratives already known (Jefferess 2013). An alternative program is not immune from the reproduction of these disabling narratives. Lastly, even with an alternative model and invitation to enter into relationships of mutuality, there is still a danger of the tendency to structure these relationships across difference as ones of pity. Gada Mahrouse's (2008) work on transnational activists uses Hannah Arendt's

distinction between relationships of pity and relationships of compassion. Mahrouse explains the difference in these relationships: “a relationship of compassion is more or less an equal one and implies a sharing of suffering. Relationships of pity, on the other hand, re-enact the power differentials between the viewer and the sufferer, rather than disrupt them” (p. 98). The process of pity creates more and more distance between us and them. She argues that the larger structures of globalized racism are such that we in the North feel compassion for the activists (what a difficult situation you chose to put yourself in, you are so great) and pity for those experience the human rights abuses who the activists are going to help. Mahrouse explains that this does nothing to disrupt global power relationships, reinforcing those who are imagined as needing pity and those imagined to bestow this pity. Because Intercordia is embedded in global relationships of power, encounters that take place in the program can be read or imagined as ones of pity by the student participants and their friends and family in Canada. The normative narrative that Southern *others* with disabilities need to be pitied and the subsequent compassion for the able-bodied Northerner helping them is one that is still read through the photos and stories that Intercordia participants send home to Canada.

This is the space in which Intercordia is engaged, one fraught with already known disabling narratives about those who deserve pity and those who can bestow this pity. A space that needs disruption, troubling and interventions. The danger is that these disruptions serve to reproduce disabling narratives; this is the anxious and precariousness of counter-cultural work in this space. Critical pedagogy and intention cannot guarantee the disruption of disablement, the danger of reproduction of disablement is always a possibility.

Conclusion: Remaining Unapologetically Radical and Engaging *Otherwise*

Where do you begin telling someone their world isn't the only one? (Walia, 2017)

Developing a Critical Pedagogy that Makes Known Processes of Disablement

Because IESL and GCE programs are based in the global system of capitalism, which is producing impairment and disablement, how can they be spaces that resist ableism and disablement? Disability and colonialism are intimately intertwined; colonial powers institutionalized people with disabilities and used institutionalization to suppress resistance to colonial projects (Ibrahim 2014, Meekosha 2011). Impairment is produced because of neo-colonial processes that fuel war, conflict, natural disaster, poverty, and associated diseases and illnesses (Meekosha 2011). We cannot work towards decolonizing the space of IESL and GCE without talking about disability and impairment in complex and critical ways. These disruptions are important in the field of critical IESL and GCE as discussions on decolonizing and challenging the structures of the field have not included a critical disability analysis. We cannot decolonize IESL and GCE without attending to disability in a critical way. These disruptions are important in the field of Critical Disability Studies as IESL and GCE are self-making projects for Northerners; subjectivities are formed and reproduced through encounters with Southern *others*, including disabled Southern *others*. Theorizing disablement in this space is important because Northerners are engaging in the reproduction of disablement through encounters facilitated in IESL and GCE learning by: individualizing and medicalizing disability, constructing charity and pity responses to disability in the South and working to obscure their own role as Northerners in the production of impairment. Pedagogical and practical disruptions to this reproduction are essential in the rocky and complex struggle for liberation for each one of us.

Here I take up how educators can work towards a more reciprocal and transformative practice of IESL and GCE; working to make known the able/disabled binaries and our role in the production of impairment and disablement. The field of IESL and GCE is lacking a critical disability lens. As my interviews with Intercordia student participants demonstrated, even programs who identify as critical, are not attending to disability in a critical way. Students are not equipped with the analytical and theoretical tools to understand the encounters with the Southern disabled *other* in ways that uncover disablement and the production of impairment. Here, I begin to work through how we can work within critical

pedagogies to ensure that they do not reproduce disablement and explicitly work to make known processes of the production of impairment. What are spaces that can facilitate the imagining of opportunities for enabling critical disability pedagogies and disabling simplistic pedagogies that individualize disability in IESL and GCE? There is a need to make existing alternative and critical pedagogies more inclusive of the intersection of disability, as it is still marginalized or hidden. How can disability be inserted into the traditional triad of sites of difference; race, gender and class? How do we get students engaging in GCE and ISL to think about disablement and impairment in complex and structural ways, when disability is still seen as a special or *othered* category? There are three larger conceptual themes at work in IESL and GCE programs that work to obscure this attention to complexity, and that make difficult learning about disability impossible to engender. They are: the overarching ableist narratives that characterize the field, the lack of a critique of disablement and de-politicization of disability, and the creation of programs designed solely with the needs and desires of the imagined able-bodied students from the North. I then move to the four pieces that need to be attended to in the facilitation of deeper learning: that international experiences need to be preceded and followed by academic courses that are housed in critical programs of study; vulnerability and mutuality should be integrated into pedagogy; the need for preparation of and support with Southern hosts, driven by their needs and desires, to deepened their participation; and pedagogy that is uncomfortable and destabilizing needs to be supported in placement, with Intercordia's model of mentorship in placement posited as an example.

Barriers to complexity

The ways in which disability is constructed and reproduced in IESL and GCE, discussed at length in Chapter Two, is an individualized and medicalized construction of disability. Students are invited into an already scripted experience, the roles of able-bodied helper and unfortunate disabled *other*, which makes it difficult to imagine differently, difficult to imagine an encounter of mutuality, difficult to imagine a politicized construction of disability, and to leave no space for learning about an alternative disability politics. This is coupled with not just the lack of a focused critique of disablement, but a powerful and dominant narrative of the Northerner coming to help, doing for, doing something, being an expert, knowing, and saving the disabled *other* in the South. The individual and medical model constructions of disability are part of the deliberate absence of a critique of disablement in the field of IESL and GCE. The Cross-Cultural Solutions and Projects

Abroad websites are representative of depoliticized attempts at moving to a more activist structural analysis, referencing stigma and lack of resources in fleeting manners, quickly covered up with feel-good statements to assuage the fears that one might be nudged towards anything political or complicated, instead positing that hand-holding and spreading joy to the disabled Southern *other* will work to erase the disabling stigma. This analysis, explicitly neo-liberal and individual, reproducing the system and capitalist forms of community (Vrasti 2012).

Casey, one of the Intercordia student participants, told me a powerful story of learning that makes known our implication in the production of impairment that is obscured or hidden, but can be made known through IESL experiences. Casey was describing the region where their host family lives, that was known for large flower plantations, grown for foreign export;

I just really hated the flower plantations. And, also the teachers at my school told me, and I don't know if there is scientific proof, or just like something they think in the community, that so many people, there was such a high level of students with disabilities, in that, like area, because of the flower plantations, cause the women were working, while pregnant without masks, while the toxic spray. Cause I think, they said that statistically they are way higher than other regions. And that was the flower plantation region. So all the teachers, and the nurse there, thought that, that was why. I found that really interesting. And then, it made me sad that my host mom was working in chemicals all day. And then, she told me, she came home crying one day because a batch of flowers, that went to the US, had been, like, some giant poisonous spider in them. And I was like, I was so annoyed, cause she was crying. She was like, the US company threatened to, our boss said that they like threatened that they were going, to like, cut, trade with us. They were going to go to a different company cause they weren't like checking the flowers. So she was so upset. She's like, if that happens, I could lose my job, or they will shut down some of the, like, women who work here. And she was so upset, and I was like. I had been sitting there, thinking for like a month, that like I'm going to boycott roses. And I am going to tell everyone I know not to buy th-roses. 'Cause it's going to, it's a bad company, then I realized that like - it kind of challenged the way that, the way I was looking at the entire process. Like, no actually, this is a really great thing for this community, for people who had no options, for work other than farming, now have a full-time job, and like it does so many great things for the community. The issue is work labour, and worker's rights. And I think, it wasn't until I sort of saw her break it down, that I realized I was looking at a problem, really really wrong.

Here Casey understands the role of their host mother as teacher. Casey explains that they had understood the situation of flower plantations in the South in a specific way, which was deeply challenged by their host mother's experience. Because of this, Casey then begins to

engage in a politicized structural analysis of the flower plantations. They move to think through the issue as one of labour rights, which has completely different solutions and struggles. The ‘reading of the world’ was led by the Southern host mother (Freire 1970: p. 8). But what I was struck by was the complete absence of a critical disability analysis. Casey was almost there, they were complicating our desire for roses as leading to the production of impairment, but the analysis did not move past that. Here I position this student as critical, engaged in critical thinking and structural analysis, open to host as a teacher, but does not have access to the larger disablement critique needed to think through the complexity of the situation. This disablement critique was not part of the tools Casey had access to. The absence of pedagogical tools meant a reduced understanding of the complexity of the situation, the politicization of disablement was not made known, was not part of the learning. The potential of a Critical Disability analysis to deepen student learning, and uncover the role of the North in the production of disability in the South (Soldatic 2013) is evident and needed.

Enabling complexity

Here I identify four pieces that can be built to resist dominant ableist narratives and that can make space for a complex critique of disablement and our intimate role in the production of impairment. Firstly, formal academic preparation rooted in intersectional analysis with the inclusion of disability as a site of difference and oppression must be foundational in IESL and GCE programming. Student participants need to be equipped with the intellectual tools they will need to understand and challenge Northern and ableist ways of thinking about the world and those who live in the South. Northerners need tools to enable them to engage in complex analysis that brings disablement into the open, countering medicalized and individualized analysis of disability. I posit that housing a relational program like Intercordia in a Critical Disability program would provide the intersectional framework needed, attending to all sites of difference and oppression. Nirma Erevellas (2014), in her piece on *Thinking with Disability Studies*, tell us that Disability Studies:

forces students to think outside the edges while imagining precarious possibilities. Because it asks questions about the very practices of pedagogy that produce damaging and sometimes death-making effects for bodies deemed non-normal. Because it insists on recognitions that pedagogical practices would rather ignore (n.p).

Housing a radical IESL or GCE program in a Critical Disability Studies department would allow for possibilities for complex learning about disablement of ‘non-normal’ bodies and

also ensure this imagining of ‘precarious possibilities’ possibilities needed in this colonized and problematic space.

The placement component of IESL or GCE must be bookended by academic courses. Student participants I interviewed spoke to the importance of the academic preparation for their experience. Three in particular, Jessie, Carter and Taylor, named the academic preparation as integral to the deepness of their learning. Barbara Heron (2006) calls for not just the debriefing of the experience, but also a deconstruction of the experience in a formal academic space. I argue that this deconstruction does not necessarily have to happen in a formal academic space; but critical pedagogical tools being taken up in a collective learning environment is necessary. Tools like Andreotti’s (2012) HEADS UP is open source and can be facilitated in a group. The deconstruction of the experience is vital. The retelling of damaging narratives without serious intellectual inquiry and interrogation reproduces bad learning, learning that “instrumentalize learning and essentialize human difference” (Tarc 2001: p. 64).

Secondly, the invitation to students in encountering the *other* needs to be intentionally rooted in vulnerability and mutuality that can work to disrupt the “emotionality of the self” (Chouliaraki 2013). Cultural scripts of doing for, helping, charity, and knowing best, are challenged through pedagogical exercises discussed in the previous chapter. This invites student participants to imagine engaging in relationships with the *other* in more just ways. When one goes into the encounter thinking that they know best, are there to help or impart knowledge, the possibility for mutuality, of even being open to thinking about mutuality, is erased or already known as not possible. When one enters the encounter already de-valuing the *other*, it is impossible to engage in a mutual way. This invitation into the encounter is essential to allow for complexity. The prior disruption of the damaging and dangerous cultural scripts is essential, and the labour-intensive pre-work is necessary.

Thirdly, in research with host families (MacDonald & Vorstermans 2015), Southern hosts asked for preparation and training for them to live and work with Northern students. This is an essential area for significant development, enabling the role of Southern hosts in the pedagogical project of IESL and GCE. Northern students receive preparation and space to work through issues and challenges in IESL and GCE. Southern hosts need this as well; and part of programming fees should go to fund this preparation. I imagine this preparation

not as ‘how to welcome and care for a Northern student’ but rather, ‘how to deal with a problematic student,’ and ‘what are recourses available when students are not living well with your family? Or your organization?’ Hosts would design and execute the workshops and they would be economically compensated, as this is labour essential to the program. Further research with Southern hosts on what these would look like and necessitate is needed. A shift in thinking that we only need to prepare those from the North to live in the South is long overdue. Katie MacDonald’s (2016) work looks at the motivations and experiences of hosts in Nicaragua using a transnational feminist perspective. She argues for more focus on hosts as meaningful participants in the pedagogical projects enacted in volunteer abroad programs, as teachers with tools and strategies in the learning journeys of the Northerners they host.

Entangled here is the ability of Southern hosts to challenge Northern students in difficult learning. By this I do not mean that hosts are not capable of this challenge, indeed Katie MacDonald’s (2016) work demonstrates the myriad of desires that Southern hosts have for the learning they want Northern students to engage in; social, political and structural in nature. Rather, by this I mean that Southern hosts are constrained by structural economic and power considerations. Southern hosts are invested in this work for many reasons, and the economic and social capital they gain are primary (MacDonald & Vorstermans 2016). These tangible rewards could be at stake if they are imagined as too critical or not welcoming enough of Northern students or if the learning gets too difficult. Southern hosts are also not outside the colonial and imperial structures and processes and internalization of these logics can work to reproduce power imbalances. Challenging these colonial constructs and inequities is fraught and violent work; can we ethically ask Southern hosts to engage in it to further Northern student’s learning? When I asked student participants about a time they were challenged by the Southern other they revealed stories that were uncomfortable for them, signalling the fraughtness of hosts engaging in this space. How can IESL and GCE organizations work with hosts to open this space and not have the negative blowback fall upon hosts? What are the ethical considerations when we consider hosts as teacher, as knowledge-holder, and how do we compensate this labour?

Intercordia’s model of mentorship can mitigate some of the difficulty that Southern hosts have in working with Northerners. Kana, a mentor, explained that working at bettering the relationships between the student participants and host families was important work for

them in their role. They described a moment when they worked through confusion that a student participant had with their volunteer placement that was causing frustrations in the host community. Kana explained that they had given a lot of energy to working through the situation with the student participant and the host family who was invested in the relationship, and wanted to know that the student participant was well. The role of mentor here was integral in working through a conflict that the Northerner was unable to live on their own. And because of the mentor, the labour of supporting the Northerner through the conflict in the volunteer work placement did not fall upon the Southern host organization, which is engaged in their own labour and struggles of working in poverty. Supporting the learning of hosts while students are in placement is also needed. Hosts imagine this as an experience of mutuality (MacDonald & Vorstermans 2016), but there is no institutionalized support for their learning. What would/could this look like? Would the role of mentor be useful in facilitating a space for a mutuality in learning between hosts and students? This is an area for further collective and participatory research. Narda Razack (2001; 2002; 2009) takes up experiences of Northern racial minority students who participate in social work experiential placements and international learning. Her research shows that because of neoliberal colonized educational climate and practices they can “never feel totally safe” (2001: pg. 224) because racism is embedded in all social structures. She finds that field instructors do not engage in “substantive analysis of anti-racist or cross-cultural practices” (2001: pg. 225) in this space. This leads to racialized students feeling like they will be penalized if they bring up experiences of racism, which indeed her research uncovered examples of. Racialized students experienced isolation while in placement, more so than white students (2001). Her research participants, racialized students, offered recommendations for decolonizing this educational space: an association of racialized field instructors who would act as advisors to students in placement, anti-oppression seminars while in placement, students should be informed of their rights in relation to discrimination before placement, and a space for racialized students to access support (2001).

Fourth, the ethos of the experience needs to be radically re-thought, with a focus on the destabilization of knowledge and being uncomfortable. IESL and GCE programs need to make space for complexity and embrace pedagogies that move away from erasure or de-politicization. A radical movement away from the experience being palatable for the Northerner (and increasingly, their parents). Gada Mahrouse (2011) posits this interesting question in her work with ethical volunteer tourists. The experience for the small group of

women she interviewed was overwhelmingly positive. Indeed, many of the women were planning to repeat the experience with the same organization. The stated goal of the organization was to show the reality, the inequity, of those in the Global South. So when one evaluates their satisfaction with the experience, it becomes that the volunteer tourists were satisfied with the quality of inequity they saw others living. It was authentic enough inequity for them. Mahrouse states that “[i]ndeed, if one considers that the tour in which they participated is such a highly racialized encounter, and that they are women with a social justice consciousness, one has to question how the experience can be so gratifying and comfortable” (p. 386). This speaks to the deep unsettling nature of IESL, the Northerner’s choice to consume the inequity of the *other* is the foundation for all experiences. This should be the starting point for all pedagogy in this space, building on this the learning should not be pleasurable. Understanding our role in disablement and the production of impairment should not be gratifying, but instead should move us to uncomfortable and uneasy ground. We should not be left satisfied or nostalgic, but confused and angry at our own role in the inequity, and ready to ask more complex questions. The goal of IESL and GCE education should be to invite students into the difficult learning that moves into the complexity and harshness of structural inequity and global Capital, rendering them unable to move back to the comforting individualized explanations for poverty and disability. A learning that leads to solidarity and allyship, not repeat IESL experiences.

Intercordia’s model of mentorship offers a way to support this difficult learning while in placement. One mentor, Jordan, explained that the engagement with student participants while they are living the experience, as opposed solely de-briefing it post-placement in Canada, is essential in working through the levels of injustice, and the complexity of the situation. They posited that without a mentor, it is easy for student participants to live the experience in a surface way, not engaging deeply. The role of the mentor is to encourage the deeper and more complicated learning, calling students back to this when they move away. But of course the presence of a mentor can only invite student participants into a space for difficult learning. Kana, the other mentor I interviewed, spoke about the difficulty of living the role of mentor, being with and supporting students who are engaged in really difficult learning while in placement. They explained a moment to describe this difficulty. The student participants had gathered together for a formal Intercordia reflection session, it was at a pivotal time in the placement, one that they described as the “point where can you step into the discomfort or retreat, a crossroads point.” Kana explained that a number of the

student participants were very angry, and they were moving towards retreating into that anger and not working through what was making them angry or frustrated. Kana revealed that they did not feel very confident in front of this anger, and was unsure about how to intervene and support them. Kana explained that the student participants were not in a place to engage in the inward reflection needed, that they would not engage below the surface of their frustration, they were taking it out on individual hosts and situations, and not approaching the anger as being about their own frustrations or reactions. Kana explained that they felt the door close as student participants were not ready to engage and work through this difficult learning. This was a difficult space for Kana to be present in. It was difficult to work at getting students to engage but not succeeding, and difficult in knowing that Southern hosts absorb the anger and frustration of the Northern students. The mentor needs training on intervening in these situations, and support, and time for self-care as they do this front-line support work.

Lastly, I end with a question in response to Judy Bruce's (n.d) exploration of the emergence of a post-critical GCE that is responding to the shortcomings and Eurocentric nature of critical GCE projects; How can disability be a radical interrogative disruption here? How can they be different than other disruptions? How can disability be a radical departure for the introduction of different ontologies and ways of being in the world? How can we imagine a different *otherwise*? This is work that is just beginning (Shildrick 2009).

Remaining Radical

The title of this chapter is a written reflection of my deepest struggle in this field of education and global engagement. I truly believe, as Vraști (2012) explains, that Northerners engaging in these experiences are “also victims of larger socio-economic transformations” - trying to survive in our post-2008 economy, shrinking job market requiring certain skills — and they are also genuinely looking for community and belonging, but what neo-liberalism has to offer is this” (p. 132). I struggle to remain faithful to doing this work in a radical way, within the neoliberal system of Capital with its logic of reproduction. I struggle to do work in labour-intensive and intentional ways asking student participants to engage in difficult learning, receiving anger and frustration when the learning is not what they expected or were willing to engage in. None of the Intercordia student participants that I interviewed were disenchanted or disillusioned by Intercordia, but over the years there have been students unwilling or unable to enter this space of deep anxiety and self-reflexivity and have

lashed out at us as educators and those engaged in the work. This speaks to a larger cultural shift to what Chouliaraki (2013) calls the “new emotionality of the self” (Angod 2015: 20). Often Northerners want the experience to be one where they feel good about their own personal growth and not one where they engage in the more difficult labour of how one’s privilege has created the conditions for poverty, disablement and inequity in the South. An extension of this is that entering into relationships of mutuality with those who are different is difficult and challenging work, much more so than relationships of pity and charity. Relationships of charity are celebrated in our culture, they are easy, comforting, feel good and reproduce our privilege. Relationships of mutuality take much more work, self-reflexivity and staying in the hard parts. The spaces in our own culture and society for relationships of mutuality with those who are different are rare, so Northerners do not come with ‘practice’ or ‘experience,’ or skills to do the labour of relational being. Northerners enter into IESL and GCE programs with the desire to live in community and to make relationships across difference but the reality of what this looks like in practice is often too messy, too difficult, and too counter-cultural for them to engage in, especially given the short time frames of many programs.

I struggle to do critical work in a field characterized by helping, charity, and disabling programs like Me to We, Cross-Cultural Solutions and Projects Abroad, who are engaging thousands and thousands of Northerners each year. The rise in IESL and GCE in universities in Canada means that more students are engaging in these kinds of programs, which work in particular ways to form certain subjects; ones that are more caring, flexible, global-minded and hold certain knowledge. This subject formation serves the needs of the current phase of Capital. The bodies of those with impairments and those disabled are used in particular ways to enable this subject formation, reproducing the individual and medical model of disability. Canadians return home with entrenched ‘knowledge’ about the disabled *other* and employ this knowledge in their lives here in Canada. Mainstream programming emphasis on the self, the Northern able-bodied person’s self-development (Chouliaraki 2013), the invitation that it is *them* that can and should bring joy, love and care to the disabled Southern *other* and that this will change their world, sets them up for personal failure and frustration. The IESL framing doesn’t include the historical conditions, disablement and the production of impairment, so the experience is internalized as an individual one for the Northern student. This leads to varying degrees of believing, ranging from the illusion of personal development and buying into the narrative that one can ‘help’ through holding the

hands of the marginalized, to the disillusionment of this narrative and a retreat into feelings of frustration and personal failure, leading to a retreat from the experience and a focus on travel and making relationships with other Northerners (Vrasti 2012). Each of these are reactions to the internalization of neoliberal individualization logics.

Intercordia's relational model: Just another steam valve?

I argue that the attention to *la vie quotidienne* is what makes the Intercordia program a different encounter with the *other* (Burghardt 2016). The emphasis is on helping students to live mutuality, to imagine and to try to form relationships of mutuality with those who are different, those who the dominant narratives say cannot engage in mutual relationships; and the commitment to accept that this might not happen, that transformation is not a sure or possible thing for all participants. This study uncovered complicated narratives and anxieties from Intercordia student participant alumni about engaging in these kinds of encounters because of the colonial, imperial implications and power imbalances that exist, and a desire to engage in relationships *with* these differences, not to move past differences as if they were not present. Fundamentally, Intercordia invites students into difficult learning not about the spaces they are entering into as chaotic, uncivilized or not functioning in certain ways, but about our own deep investments in systems that perpetuate this view of the world. There is a focus on the self, but in a radically new way (Chouliaraki 2013). It is a critical departure from the depoliticized, privileged self-development focus that uses the body of the marginalized Southern *other* to form Northerners as caring, helping, and saving subjects. However, the Intercordia framework needs to include an explicit critique of disablement, as many students engaged in the Intercordia program are open to imagining the world in alternative ways and to self-reflexivity (Andreotti 2016) and therefore, I argue that the space to do this critical work does exist here. Alternative and critical pedagogy is needed in order to blur able/disabled binaries, make known the intimate ways in which the Global North is producing impairment and disablement in the Global South, and ways in which benevolent and caring subjectivities further marginalize and oppress those already disabled by the system of Capital and neoliberalism. The Intercordia program can be a natural site for this disruptive learning. The student participants are engaging in international placements where the production of impairment and disability is ongoing; flower plantations in Ecuador, transnational mining and resource extraction activities in the Dominican Republic, and the history of genocide and neo-colonial responses to impairments and mental health in Rwanda, post-conflict Bosnia and L'Arche communities in the Global South and Canada.

Is Intercordia's model, with its intention of disrupting the hierarchy of the one who helps and the one who needs help, actually creating a space where this can happen? Yes, my interviews with alumni did affirm moments of disruption, deep learning about inequity, and the reproduction of neoliberalism, but of course this is uneven, and is missing a critical disability lens that would deepen the understanding of the production of impairment and the complexity of disablement. And the greatest danger is that it can function as a site to reproduce neoliberal subjectivities, instead of subjectivities that will challenge the system of Capital. This disruption cannot be fully explained without the inclusion of the Southern *other's* narratives of mutuality. If the learning is mutual, the reading of the world that Freire (1970) places at the center of change is happening. This question must be put to Southern hosts as well, asking them about this process of naming the world, and whether they feel this is happening in this space. This study cannot tell us the impacts on the lives of those hosting the Northern students, so for the pedagogy to be truly evaluated for its strength of mutuality, in-depth qualitative interviews with Southern hosts needs to be undertaken.

When we enter into conversation with critical others about critical work, it becomes more critical. Contradictions we, as primary researchers, did not notice come to light. Here I reflect on the impact over intentionality of the Intercordia program. This research leads to the questions of ways the Intercordia model can be understood as a precursor to revolution and ways it is just another way to engage in affectively pleasurable moments that act as a steam valve for a rage that calls for a burning down of the system (Vrasti 2012)? Certainly, Vanier's philosophical approach can be read as squarely grounded in a white liberalism. During my MA graduate studies in the Netherlands, I traveled to Trosly, France to visit the founding L'Arche community where my brother was living as an assistant. He lived in a huge home, sharing life with 14 or 15 other people. Meal times were noisy and boisterous. It was Christmas time and the house was hosting Vanier for dinner that night. I was sitting next to him and decided that I wanted to ask him a political question about Cuba. I had heard him tell a story about his days as a Canadian marine, when they docked in the Cuban port of la Habana, so I knew he had visited the country. I asked him what he thought of the political system there. He sat quietly, then turned to me and said something like 'when you visit a country for 2-3 days you think you know everything there is to know. Then you are there for a week and realize you know nothing at all.' And that was it.

Rachel Gorman (personal communication, May 17, 2017) asked me to account for this danger in the model of Intercordia actually working to reproduce a peace akin to *Pax Americana* by ensuring that those who want to change the system do not engage in radical revolutionary work. Instead they work for a peace within the system, a neoliberal peace and justice. To engage in the idea that person-to-person encounters, living with, like Intercordia facilitates, is what will work towards the creation of a more peaceful world, and not the active and deliberate tearing down of the structures of capitalism that protect the wealth of a transnational elite. Intercordia sits in comparison with the example of Cuba's early literacy campaign, which sent Cubans to the countryside, the mountains and the parts of the country with no previous access to education before the triumph of the Revolution (Blum, 2008; Kempf, 2014). An example of 'living with' for a more just world. Here the living with was explicitly about and within the active rebuilding of an alternative to capitalism. It was overtly political and ideological work. With this comparison, I understand the intention of the Intercordia model as a sort of precursor to revolution, a training of how to be with *others* in more just ways, how to authentically work to learn from the *other* and understand the world in ways they experience it. But in the pedagogical work of being open and leaving space for being open to what the *other* teaches, it becomes complicated. So Intercordia hopes and intends for the living with to lead to the action of learning about and building another world, and does things to make that happen: intensive preparation of Northern students going abroad, asking them to be open to asking difficult questions about their place in the world and systems of privilege; the commitment to engaging in authentic and trusting mutual relationships with partners in the Global South who do the labour of hosting and educating the Northern students, giving hosts space to invite students to be with them in ways they desire and demand; and the commitment to mentorship to remove some of the burden on hosts of the emotional labour needed to work with students in these radical moments of difficult learning. This opens a possibility, the unstable possibility, for a disruption of reproducing the inequities of our neoliberal world. The hope is that this learning will happen for some students. It is a first invitation to learn from marginalized *others* about being in the world differently.

So the intention of the Intercordia model might be radical, but learning is unpredictable and so a lot of the time it results in Northerners engaging in affectively pleasurable moments that act as a steam valve for outright rage and burning down of the system (Vrasti 2012). Intercordia was formed and is living in the context of neoliberalism,

working with students formed by neoliberalism, with Southern hosts who have internalized colonial and neo-colonial violences and myths of who is developed/civilized and who needs to be developed/civilized. So while the pedagogy and intentionality of Intercordia may be to intervene in colonial, imperial, racist, ableist and violent reproductions of our world, by inviting Northerners to engage in relationships of mutuality in the work of “[creating] a world in which it will be easier to love” (Freire 1970, 40), the impact might be as a release valve to keep the most radical Northerners from revolutionary consciousness and activity, providing them with a space where they can be just radical enough, but not radical enough to want to engage in the complete overhaul of the capitalist system. Student participants make relationships with host families in the South, and can engage in individual responses to inequity. They are not building internationalist solidarity like the Cuban model (Huish, 2013; Kirk, 2016). Research participants lamented the lack of spaces to engage after their experience. Neoliberalism has crushed spaces for living differently. This is the most compelling critique of alternative, radical or *otherwise* programs; when they do not go far enough, which is always the danger, they run the risk of acting as a steam valve (Vrasti 2012). Disruptions can happen, encounters can be re-structured, to say otherwise is too simplistic, but will transformative revolutionary love be the result for every Northern participant engaging in this space? Most definitely not. Is there the unstable potential for revolutionary love? Of course. Can this lead to the destabilization of the economic systems that structure disablement? Probably not. But it can be a space that opens the possibilities for it. Then spaces for resistance are sought out.

Where I see a clear example of the intent of the Intercordia model succeeding is when Casey, a student participant, discussed a radical moment of learning facilitated by their Southern host mother. Casey described their thoughts on the large flower plantations that characterized the region where their host family lives. Casey explained that they had initially thought of the plantations as an absolute evil; a necessary injustice to be eliminated. Through discussions with their host mother, they began to understand it as an “issue [of] work labour, and worker’s rights. And I think, it wasn’t until I sort of saw her break it down, that I realized I was looking at a problem, really really wrong.” Here we see the education of the Northerner as to what needs to happen to make material economic change in the lives of those who welcomed her to their community. The solution becomes worker owned cooperatives or union organizing to ensure fair wages, health and safety protection. These are tangible and viable changes that would disrupt the current system of Capital. The living

with encounter facilitated this political exchange. Casey lived with the Southern *other* engaged in the labour of flower production, Casey was open to understanding what the desires and needs of the Southern *other* were, and the learning became radically different for Casey. So the being with led to the politically new understanding of how Capital structures the lives of Southern *others* and what ways Southern *others* imagine new or different for themselves. This is an example of Freire's (1970) call to change beginning with learning to "name the world" (pg. 8) Casey gave other examples of this naming of the world, for example, of their host brother naming their privilege as a white Canadian able to move freely, which stood in stark comparison to the host brother's inability to travel due to economic and barriers that serve the bordered system of capitalism.

Where I see the danger of the Intercordia model in reference to this idea of reproducing a neoliberal peace and justice is the critique I attend to on the focus on relationship – the being with – can be understood by Northern participants as an invitation to not think about economic inequities that are ever present in North-South encounters. When Southern *others* name the inequity (Freire 1970), Northern participants can become uneasy and hear the naming of the inequity as a threat to the authenticity of the relationship, an intrusion in the mutuality. I heard this from student participants in their discussions around Southern hosts asking for money. When I asked Northern participants why they thought the Southern hosts hosted them I commonly heard that it was for something other than economic reasons. Northerners were uncomfortable with the economic dimension of the encounter. It was understood as a disruption to their belonging. Hosts have a more robust and complex understanding of how affect, belonging and economics can co-exist (MacDonald & Vorstermans, 2017). Only one participant, Casey, was upfront about talking about this piece of the encounter, discussing it openly with their host family. The role of the mentor can be essential in the thinking through of these conversations, of asking Northern participants to think through in more complex ways the effects of privilege and power in relationships with hosts. Making known the complexities of different economic actors living together.

Of course the model can facilitate the role of a steam valve, but it is also a space for the radical formation of a subject that can challenge neoliberalism. I heard this clearly from critical participants engaged in self-reflexive analysis. It was Southern hosts that engaged them in direct conversation about the way the world is, Freire's reading the world (1970),

and together they understood something essential about Capital, how it is organized, and who benefits. The pedagogy of attending to the *other* was essential here. Where this learning takes them is another question, for another study.

Self and Praxis

This work is grounded in the literature and personal experience, my own learning and the learning of building (very small) revolutionary change. My praxis has been deeply shaped by Vanier, L'Arche, Intercordia, and so many in the Global South who welcome those from the North with a desire for solidarity and mutuality. I am deeply uncomfortable with the countless ethical issues, deep inequities and endless potential for damage on Southern hosts inherent in IESL and GCE experiences. I oscillate between wanting to stay engaged in this space, in an anxious state (Salih & Butler 2004), committed to self-reflexivity and calling others to be “in it” in this way (Ahmed 2000 in Mahrouse 2014), and wanting to remove myself completely from the field and engaging in a labour far removed from ethical and colonial encounters, like baking cinnamon buns.⁵ I take refuge in Vanier's lived example, his commitment to living with those who are different, those who are marginalized, for over 50 years. His message (1998) that relationship is at the heart of our humanness, and that committing oneself to making relationships based on trust, love, mutuality with those who are different, and remaining faithful to them, is the path to a more peaceful world is something that calls me to this work when I feel hopeless or overwhelmed.

Engaging in relationships across difference in community reveals our own anguish, or our own ‘poverty’ in Vanier-speak (Vanier 2006). This can leave us discouraged and burnt out. It is endless work, and we need to commit for the long haul (Heron 2007). But this is the only work I ever learned to do. Growing up in L'Arche during its radical and foundational years, it is the work my parents, and all those around me, engaged in. When I was studying at the undergraduate level I had a conversation with a long-term L'Arche person. He is a founding member of L'Arche, engaged in the mission his entire adult life. He mused about whether the children of those who founded L'Arche, like him and my parents, would value higher education. We grew up with the knowledge and example that Vanier left the academy for something more meaningful, as he explains, “I didn't want to be committed to ideas but to people” (Wilson-Hartgrove 2009: n.p). We grew up with the

⁵ Oh the privilege to have this choice.

dominant narrative that relationships of the heart with those who are marginalized (those with intellectual disabilities) are what should be at the center of all transformational change. L'Arche self-identifies as a school of the heart, which is often positioned as being more important than the school of the mind. That relationship with those who are different, the lived day to day of community, can teach us more than theory and literature in the academe. This has always stayed with me, and most certainly guides my academic scholarship. I have always privileged the knowledge of the marginalized *other*, understood their lived experience as knowledge. As Harsha Walia (2017) makes known about the myth of a hierarchy of knowledge, "no knowledge is objective, no knowledge is not produced from lived experience." I reject the often alienating conditions and logic of the academy, and I am in a constant state of self-reflexivity around my role in engaging in research, as a producer of knowledge, and whether I indeed belong here. This work is imbibed with these questions and anxieties, and is deeply personal, something I did not intentionally start out doing, but took this shape organically as I engaged with the literature and the data.

Weaknesses and Gaps

This study would have been strengthened by the perspective of a Northern student who identifies as disabled and participated in the Intercordia program. This perspective would have brought a needed epistemological richness that is absent in this study. What would the narratives of their encounters look like? How did the able/disabled binary structure their expectations and knowing of the *other* and the ways in which they engaged with the *other*? A number of student participants talked about their experiences with what might be labeled as anxiety in a medicalized context, but the ways they talked about these experiences were not ones in which they identified as disabled. Secondly, I argue that IESL encounters are raced, classed, gendered and disabled. Is this work reproducing an erasure of this? I engage in the embodied experiences from Intercordia alumni, to the extent that I can because of the anonymity of the research participants. This is something that I will work into the methodological process of future research in this area.

Another way this study would have been strengthened is by engaging with IESL and GCE programs that are designed by people with disabilities that subvert the neo-colonial and disabling gaze. What do/would these invitations look like? In my research, I have not come across an organization working from this position. There is research on the inclusion of Northern volunteers with disabilities in IESL and GCE programs (*International Journal*

of Volunteer Administration, Special Issue on Engaging Volunteers with Disabilities, 2010). This research focuses on the right for Northern volunteers with disabilities to participate in volunteer abroad programs, serving others, as a way to subvert the disabling narrative of people with disabilities as not being able to serve or care for others. But I have not found a Disabled Person's Organization (DPO) engaged in IESL and GCE that is working from a critical framework. I assume that this is partly because DPOs in the South are engaged in work tied to local experiences of disablement and capacity, and resources to do education work with Northern students in this area would be scarce. Further, people with disabilities in the South are not immune to internalized colonial and imperial rationalities.

My positionality and deep investment in Intercordia and my life formation in L'Arche was a help and also a challenge to this study. I endeavoured to always engage in the research with all of my flaws and vulnerability, to move away from judgement of Northerners engaging in IESL and GCE programs, as they too are vulnerable and flawed humans. My closeness to this area of research is deep: my life partner is from the Global South; we have a daughter that is racialized and inhabits two different worlds and identities (Canada and the Dominican Republic). I have been involved in the mission of L'Arche my whole life, I grew up in L'Arche with Vanier as a very formative presence. I participated in the Intercordia program as an undergraduate student in 2005, and have worked with the organization for the last 7 years in various capacities. I am unable to detangle myself in ways that another researcher might. There are positives and negatives here that I am in a constant negotiation with and continually open to processing. I am deeply invested and am unable to be critical in ways that a researcher on the outside might be. I think this study would be strengthened by an outside researcher taking up the pedagogy and ways Intercordia engages in the field, bringing new critiques and tensions for Intercordia to struggle with and respond to.

As a methodological note, my deep investment in Intercordia and my role in the journey of many of the Intercordia student participants I interviewed afforded me a deep context within which to embed their interviews. Gada Mahrouse's methodological piece on emotions comes to mind here. She was surprised by the expressions of love from the student participants she interviewed after they spent a short time volunteering in Nicaragua (2015). I posit that the larger context that I was able to bring allowed me to contextualize these expressions of affect in a different way, due to my positionality as researcher who had been on a particular journey with a number of the research participants. For example, in knowing

the stories of participants, which may include a deep sense of alienation and hurt in the ways in which their family was broken or lived trauma, giving context for the ways in which they lived relationships with the *other*, ways they responded to being welcomed in ways they had not experienced by their own family, or by someone outside of their family or close friends. The gift of receiving the life stories of countless Intercordians over the years has been formative for the ways in which I understand relationality.

My investment in the organization gives me unique access and a deep understanding that I would not have been afforded if I engaged in this research as an outsider. The richness of the data is a result of the relationships and trust that I have formed with participants in the South, and in the North. I want to offer two examples of this. In the Dominican Republic, I interviewed a host mother with whom I had built a relationship with. She answered a question about a time when a student integrated really well and what that looked like. She responded that the student she was hosting was very respectful and caring, and that she had never had to discipline her. I was so struck with her candour and openness to be so frank with me. She was willing to discipline her ‘host daughter’ but was happy that she didn’t have to. She trusted that I knew that this was an expression of her care and role as the one caring for someone else’s daughter, and not as a punitive act or one that might be taken as a negative. Her agency was on full display here. Another example is when I asked each alumni participant on whether they would like me to send them the places where I use quotes or ideas from them, in the spirit of participant-focused research, to engage them as full partners in the research process before I finalized this work. I heard from each one that they had full trust in me, that they trusted me with their words, stories and experiences. These were both affirming moments for me. But also moments that I take seriously and know that bring along a deep moral and ethical obligation.

An overall weakness, in the Vanier sense of the term - both the difficult and the beauty in struggle - of this study, and indeed all of my work in the academy, is my struggle with writing academic work as a (working to be) radical invested in grassroots work. I feel the constant pressure of performance in the academy, of not being good enough, but I also feel the constant weight of remaining radical and accessible to the grassroots movements for justice. Jonathan Neale (2015) explains, “Radicals are always under pressure. Like women, or people of colour, they always have to perform better – particularly if they already are women or people of colour. One of the keys to survival in this situation is to realize just how

heavy is the weight of mainstream ideology on radical shoulders” (p. 11). This sentence helped me in the low times of feeling overwhelmed and not adequate. I am also anxious about doing justice to the deeply personal and intimate stories that student participants shared with me. Their openness to being vulnerable, to taking risks and sharing their difficult and often ugly moments is something that I was so honoured to receive, and as I finish this study I am left with lingering feelings of anxiety around doing it justice. There were so many more important stories, moments, narratives and reflections that I could not attend to in this study.

Further Research

Areas for further study are diverse and there are many possibilities. Further research needs to be done on the myth of able-bodiedness that structures who is a participant in IESL and GCE programs. I have started this conversation, but research with participants who experience their impairment in different ways, or a deeper disablement while abroad because of the loss of supports, as a reaction to the change, or as a reaction to the disruptive learning they are engaged in, needs to be undertaken. I have worked with participants who experienced panic attacks, anxiety and depression while overseas and this experience needs to be understood within the hegemonic construction of the able-bodied global citizen. As the intersection of globalizing or internationalizing the university, the push for students to consume a global experience as part of their higher education experience, and higher numbers of students who identify as having a disability enrolled in university, the myth of the able-bodied Northerner helping the Southern disabled *other* needs to be continually worked through in complex and critical ways.

Further research needs to be done with hosts, asking them about these same themes I took up in this study. How student participants read their interactions and how hosts read those same interactions will differ. I asked questions about mutuality and how they experienced this with others - what would hosts say about these moments? How do hosts understand student participants as belonging to their family and community? Or as guests or tourists? Indeed research has shown that student participants read their experience as authentic - but they did not actually meaningfully engage with local people as a part of that ‘authentic’ experience. Instead, “getting dirty and sweaty together, and living close to the community” seemed to be enough to make the experience authentic (Zavitz & Butz 2011: 429). How do hosts understand this process of meaningful engagement? Katie MacDonald

(2016) has started critical feminist research in this area, interrogating the concept of proximity as transformative. I wrote this study as an intervention into the critical IESL and GCE literature, to bring disability into the conversation. Further research in the area of volunteer abroad and IESL and GCE should include disability as a specific site of analysis. Lastly, more work is needed with ICC alumni in 10, 20, 30 years to come back to these themes and ask them where they are now with these ideas, understanding how relational programs like Intercordia manifest themselves in participant's lives and learning in the longer term.

Entanglements

I am left feeling desolated and hopeful through this research. There are a growing number of IESL and GCE programs created and housed in the North that reproduce colonial and imperial relationships, further marginalize and oppress Southern *others*, and reproduce negative constructions of disability as individual and medicalized. They attract thousands and thousands of Northerners every year. Alternative programs are tiny in comparison, and at best ask students to enter into a space where they are willing to ask difficult questions, work at recognizing their own privilege and role in systems of Capital and disablement, and work through this difficult learning. Casey, an Intercordia student participant who provided some of the most complex and critical reflections of their time in the program, engaging in difficult learning, reflected on one of the fundamental ethical issues at play here;

I think, it's hard, cause I think it can be such a valuable experience for students, but I think it can probably be really damaging for host families, I think my host family finds it like really, they would talk about it is so hard when you leave." They then go on to talk about visiting their host family later, and at the same time another student was also visiting and engaged in really devaluing and reductionist talk about the host family. The participant began to think that if this is the way people who have lived with the family think and act, then maybe this is not a ethical or good thing to do. They ended with, "It's great for students, but what about hosts?"

This illustrates my desolation and my consolation in this work; desolation for the ways in which students engage in negative and disabling ways, and consolation that there are young people open and searching for a critical space to challenge this negative engagement, searching for spaces that can imagine difference as a source of richness, and not something to be feared or shunned (Intercordia 2016). However, as Casey's reflection on entering a colonized space (Chapter 4) explains, whose bodies and land are being intruded upon in order to facilitate this learning? Is it ever ethical? Can we even ask such broad questions because each community that hosts Northerners is different; context matters. Are we even

able to make broad assumptions as each community can/has made their own decisions and resistances to IESL practices? The entanglements are many and we have an ethical and moral obligation to engage in and with them.

I want to end with the loving words of Paulo Freire, “From these pages I hope at least the following will endure: my trust in the people, and my faith in men and women, and in the creation of a world in which it will be easier to love” (1970, 40). I add that I hope that from these pages at least the following will endure, my trust in Vanier’s call that we can enter into relationships across difference, the long and slow relational work of solidarity and trust is possible if we remain unapologetically radical in our commitment to intentionality and mutuality.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEWS WITH INTERCORDIA ALUMNI

Semi-structured qualitative interview guide

Demographic

What year of university were you in when you completed Intercordia and how old were you?

What was your field of study?

How many years has it been since you completed Intercordia?

Have you gone on to do any other international service learning or experiential education programs? Had you done any prior?

How did these look different or similar?

Before you started Intercordia

What were some of the reasons you decided to enrol in the Intercordia program?

How did you experience the preparation through the Intercordia program?

What do you wish you thought through before you went to placement?

Did you feel prepared before you left for placement? In what way? In what ways were you not prepared?

What did you think about the discussions around vulnerability in the preparation seminars?

What were some narratives of encountering difference that you heard in preparation?

While you were in placement overseas

Can you tell me about your placement, country, community, organization you volunteered with, a bit about your host family?

Why do you think your family hosted you?

Can you describe a time when your assumptions about a certain issue or belief were challenged? What did you learn from this challenge? Did it make you think/be differently?

Can you tell me about a mutual, caring relationship from your experience? Explain why you feel it was mutual relationship?

Did you experience times of vulnerability in placement? How did you experience these times? Tell me a story about a time.

What was a moment of solidarity or mutuality for you? How do you think the others in this situation experienced it?

What was a challenge for you in your placement?

What is a story of success for you?

Barbara Heron says: “An accountable bourgeois subject can be called to account, which means she (or he) seriously, if painfully, engages with critiques offered by the Other” (2007: 155). Can you tell me about a time when you were confronted in this way? Confronted about your privilege? About your role in systems of domination (race, ableism, class)? Was this overt? Subvert? How did you react? From a place of hurt? Anger? Have you reflected on this? What do you feel now? Talk this out. What do you think helped you get here?

Now that you have completed the program

Have you heard the term ‘global citizen’? Was this something on your mind when you applied for Intercordia?

What do you think are important characteristics of a global citizen?

Do you see yourself as a global citizen?

Who else would you say is a global citizen? Those you met through the Intercordia experience?

Is it OK to engage in this type of process or experience to JUST learn critically about the world? Or do you feel like there is an imperative to also enact critical change, in yourself, your community, the world .. Simply: Is it OK to engage in a program like ICC and not enact changes in ways that you think will engage with the issues of injustice you identified or saw while in placement? Things your host family lived?

ANY OTHER STORIES – THINGS – THOUGHTS – FEELINGS you want to share?

Informed Consent Form

Date: January –March 2016

Study Name: Challenging the Disabling and Exclusionary Narratives of ‘I’ve Come to Help!’ and ‘Global Citizens from the North’: Using Critical Disability Theory to Unlearn, Reframe, and Challenge Knowledge Hierarchies and Disabling Tropes in International Experiential Education

Researcher:

Jessica Vorstermans

Critical Disability Studies

York University

email: x@x.ca

phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX

Purpose of this research: I am exploring encounters in the field of international experiential education that engage disability, and which are embedded in the larger disabling landscape of this growing field. Influenced by ideas from studies in critical pedagogy, critical disability studies and the alternative framework of the practice and pedagogy of Intercordia Canada, I believe that we can imagine and do international experiential education differently. How this plays out on the ground will be explored through interviewing participants from universities in Canada who have participated in Intercordia Canada. I will pay specific attention to narratives around disability, vulnerability and disablement. I will explore the pedagogical framework of Intercordia Canada, with its emphasis on relationships across difference and encounters of mutuality as an alternative framework that invites participants to engage meaningfully with one another in experiential education programs in the Global South.

What you will be Asked to Do in the Research: Answer a number of questions in a short interview (1 hour) with the researcher. The interview will be taped.

Risks and Discomforts: I do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in this research.

Benefits of this Research and Benefits to You: This research will inform the growing field of international experiential education as to alternative ways of engaging with difference and ask some key questions as to how we can actually do this. You will benefit from being part of the project of making known alternative ways of being with those who are different in this space, and hopefully influencing those engaged in this work to engage differently and in more ethical ways. I also envision this as a space for you to continue to think about your experiences with Intercordia and ways you want to further your own learning and growth in areas you were challenged in while living abroad.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of your relationship with the researcher, or any other group associated with this project, either now, or in the future. You have the right to opt out of answering any particular question.

Withdrawal from the Study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, or any other group

associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

Confidentiality: All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. The data will be collected through interviews in conjunction with the researcher. Contact information and consent forms will be kept apart from the transcribed interviews.

Completed interviews will be transcribed into electronic data by the researcher and the originals destroyed. Consent forms will be kept for two years until destroyed and electronic data will be encrypted, made anonymous and kept only by the researcher.

Questions about the Research?: If you have any questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Isabel Killoran either by telephone at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or by email: x@xca.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics Guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York University Research Tower, York University (telephone XXX-XXX-XXXX or email x@x.ca).

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I _____ consent to participate in the research study *Challenging the Disabling and Exclusionary Narratives of 'I've Come to Help!' and 'Global Citizens from the North': Using Critical Disability Theory to Unlearn, Reframe, and Challenge Knowledge Hierarchies and Disabling Tropes in International Experiential Education* conducted by Jessica Vorstermans. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Participant

Date

Principal Investigator

Date

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS WITH INTERCORDIA MENTORS

Demographic info

What year did you mentor and how old were you?

What was your field of study?

Before you mentored

What were some of the reasons you wanted to mentor with Intercordia?

What do you wish you thought through before you began your role?

Did you feel prepared before you left for placement? In what way?

In what ways were you not prepared?

While you were overseas

What was your personal philosophy or ethos of how you wanted to be as a mentor? In other words – how did you approach your role? How did you want to support students?

How did you react to students when they were struggling? How did you support them? Tell me a story.

What was your relationship to the partner organization overseas? How did you see their work?

Can you tell me about a mutual, caring relationship from your experience? Explain why you feel it was mutual relationship?

Did you experience times of vulnerability in placement? How did you experience these times? Tell me a story about a time.

What was a moment of solidarity or mutuality for you? How do you think the others in this situation experienced it?

What was a challenge for you in your placement?

What is a story of success for you?

Now that you have completed the program

Have you heard the term ‘global citizen’? Was this something on your mind when you mentored?

Do you see yourself as a global citizen?

Who else would you say is a global citizen? Those you met through the Intercordia experience?

What do you think/feel about this in relation to the experience of Intercordia participants: Is it OK to engage in this type of process or experience to JUST learn critically about the world? Or do you feel like there is an imperative to also enact critical change, in yourself, your community, the world? Simply: Is it OK to engage in a program like ICC and not enact changes in ways that you think will engage with the issues of injustice you identified or saw while in placement?

Informed Consent Form

Date: January –March 2016

Study Name: Challenging the Disabling and Exclusionary Narratives of ‘I’ve Come to Help!’ and ‘Global Citizens from the North’: Using Critical Disability Theory to Unlearn, Reframe, and Challenge Knowledge Hierarchies and Disabling Tropes in International Experiential Education

Researcher:

Jessica Vorstermans

Critical Disability Studies

York University

email: x@x.ca

phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX

Purpose of this research: I am exploring encounters in the field of international experiential education that engage disability, and which are embedded in the larger disabling landscape of this growing field. Influenced by ideas from studies in critical pedagogy, critical disability studies and the alternative framework of the practice and pedagogy of Intercordia Canada, I believe that we can imagine and do international experiential education differently. How this plays out on the ground will be explored through interviewing participants from universities in Canada who have participated in Intercordia Canada. I will pay specific attention to narratives around disability, vulnerability and disablement. I will explore the pedagogical framework of Intercordia Canada, with its emphasis on relationships across difference and encounters of mutuality as an alternative framework that invites participants to engage meaningfully with one another in experiential education programs in the Global South.

What you will be Asked to Do in the Research: Answer a number of questions in a short interview (1 hour) with the researcher. The interview will be taped.

Risks and Discomforts: I do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in this research.

Benefits of this Research and Benefits to You: This research will inform the growing field of international experiential education as to alternative ways of engaging with difference and ask some key questions as to how we can actually do this. You will benefit from being part of the project of making known alternative ways of being with those who are different in this space, and hopefully influencing those engaged in this work to engage differently and in more ethical ways. I also envision this as a space for you to continue to think about your experiences with Intercordia and ways you want to further your own learning and growth in areas you were challenged in while living abroad.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of your relationship with the researcher, or any other group associated with this project, either now, or in the future. You have the right to opt out of answering any particular question.

Withdrawal from the Study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

Confidentiality: All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. The data will be collected through interviews in conjunction with the researcher. Contact information and consent forms will be kept apart from the transcribed interviews.

Completed interviews will be transcribed into electronic data by the researcher and the originals destroyed. Consent forms will be kept for two years until destroyed and electronic data will be encrypted, made anonymous and kept only by the researcher.

Questions about the Research?: If you have any questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Isabel Killoran either by telephone at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or by email: x@x.ca.

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If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York University Research Tower, York University (telephone XXX-XXX-XXXX or email X@X.ca).

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I _____ consent to participate in the research study Challenging the Disabling and Exclusionary Narratives of 'I've Come to Help!' and 'Global Citizens from the North': Using Critical Disability Theory to Unlearn, Reframe, and Challenge Knowledge Hierarchies and Disabling Tropes in International Experiential Education conducted by Jessica Vorstermans. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Participant

Date

Principal Investigator

Date

APPENDIX C: Email Approach to Research Participants

Hello (person's name),

I hope this email finds you well! I am well and constantly discovering newness with little Saskia - she is one now and on the move! Life is full!

I am back at my doctoral thesis and am (very broadly) looking at whether the alternative framing in Intercordia's programming, of mutuality and vulnerability, allow participants to unlearn the damaging pedagogical practices that are present in mainstream international experiential education programmes? Does this programming call students to enter into a different learning space where these practices can be challenged or resisted? Is a space where participants can challenge the organizational forces that shape our consent to our current phase of capitalism and capitalist forms of community, what Vradi (2010), influenced by Foucault, calls "a more tolerable, equitable, and pleasurable phase/face of capitalism" that "conceal[s] its tensions and postpone[s] its crises" (p. 2).

I am wondering if you would be open to a one-hour interview with me - we could do it on Skype or I could meet you somewhere close to _____. I want to ask you some questions about your Intercordia experience. They will look like this: Can you describe a time when your assumptions about a certain issue or belief were challenged? What did you learn from this challenge? Did it make you think/be differently? Can you tell me about a mutual, caring relationship from your experience? Explain why you feel it was mutual relationship? Did you experience times of vulnerability in placement? How did you experience these times? Tell me a story about a time.

Please let me know if you are open to this - I am aiming to have my interviews completed by the end of November - so I would like to meet soon! If you think of another alumni who might be interested, please let me know and I will connect with them too.

Many thanks and peace to you!

Jessica